STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN SANCTITY

BY

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FOREWORD

THE fundamental idea that pervades this book from beginning to end is that the type of morality and sanctity which Christ preached by word and example is the only type that satisfies the higher cravings of man in his relation to God and Society.

The book is addressed principally to Catholics; yet it appeals to any man who wishes to make good use of his reasoning faculty. If the book be read with an open mind, free from religious prejudice, it will convince the reader that a thoroughly safe guide to regulate the moral actions of the individual, the family and civil society, can only be found in the teaching which Christ bequeathed to His Church.

The triumph of Christian moral principles over the paganism of ancient Rome and Greece has naturally suggested to the author a comparative study of the present position of India in regard to Christianity. He has carefully diagnosed India's moral disease and shows that, as in the case of Greece and Rome, the salvation of India can only be sought in the sanctity of Christ. He expresses the hope that the time may not be very far when India, like Greece

and Rome, retaining all that is worth keeping of her immense cultural treasure, will, as a body, abandon her present chaotic religious and moral systems in favour of Christianity.

Though the process of actual conversion in India is at present very slow, the process of preparation for a fuller Pentecost is advancing fast enough. Students of religious and social problems in India are unanimous in admitting that India is fast becoming inpregnated with Christian ideals and is thus getting ready to place herself as a nation at the feet of Christ, the Eternal King.

By the publication of this volume Father Ferroli is bringing to this movement no small contribution.

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INTRODUCTION

THESE STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN SANCTITY were begun some years ago, and were meant for the I. C. T. S. But little by little the matter grew under my hand, and I was advised to turn them into a full-sized book. This was undertaken with considerable difficulty, and under the grave limitations imposed on a Missionary, who lacks well furnished Libraries, and is too far from the centre of Catholic life to feel its pulse, and appraise its needs correctly. Anyway, chapter after chapter, the book took shape, and though primarily intended for Catholics, it will, it is hoped, serve to dispel many prejudices from the minds of well disposed and good Protestants, and will not be entirely useless even for well educated Hindus and Mohammedans.

There are two methods of dealing with a subject like "*Christian Sanctity*," which may be called Static and Dynamic. The former states and develops the principles of Christian Sanctity, compares them with purely human ethical and religious principles, and brings out their excellence and grandeur. The latter method, on the contrary, shows Christian Sanctity at work, either in the individual Saint, or in Society at large.

In the present work both methods have been adopted; the static method in the first three chapters, where the purely human conceptions of morality are touched upon, in order to afford the reader an opportunity of better appreciating Christ's ideals; these then are described at some length, both as they appear in their native sources, the Gospels, and as they are divinely interpreted in the letters of St. Paul.

The fourth chapter follows both methods at once, for the various aspects of Christian Sanctity are gradually illustrated by way of contrast with the many misrepresentations they have been subjected to, throughout the centuries. At first I

intended to confine my remarks to Christian Antiquity; but then, considering that later errors are rarely original, but mainly consist of more or less obvious variations of the same fundamental views, the chapter was lengthened out to its present proportions, sub-divisions being adopted in order not to weary the reader.

In the next two chapters the dynamic method has again the upper hand, for we are made acquainted there with the marvellous effects of Christian Sanctity on the first followers of Christ, and on the Pagan world.

Some may consider the sixth chapter to be out of place here. But I have to say that I was led to write it as a natural sequence to that which deals with the victory of Christ over ancient and modern Paganism. In fact if India still suffers from almost the same moral and religious diseases which afflicted Ancient Rome, is it not owing to the fact that the Sanctity of Christ is still foreign to the great majority of Indians? If by these few pages we were led to a better understanding of the immeasurable debt we owe to Christ, I think the object of the chapter would be fully justified.

Some remarks have to be made here on the modifications of method in the Evangelization of India which have been suggested in chapter VI.

As to the first suggestion, which implies "*More direct and intensive Missionary Work on behalf of Indian Women,*" I confess I do not rely much on purely indigenous contributions to such an enterprise; for, Indian Religious Congregations of Women, though excellent in many ways, have, so far, sinned by excessive *mimetism.* Besides, the work I have in mind requires qualities of tenderness, self-reliance and courage—a combination rarely met with in Indian women, who are eminently tender and devoted, but can hardly be described as fearless and self-reliant. In fact my eyes turn to the Catholic Women of America, hoping that they will help

towards this most necessary, but difficult work; for even in Europe our Catholic Women do not seem to possess an abundance of that spirit of independence from routine, and healthy elasticity with regard to "*l'esprit de notre Institut,*" which is so necessary to strike upon a new path.

The second point views "*the introduction or establishment of Orders of Penance and Contemplation in India.*" The idea, of course, is not mine; it has been strongly advocated by the Holy Father himself. When I speak of the necessity for members of these Orders to avoid such luxuries as villas and motor-cars, no reflection is intended on the practice of some Catholic Missionaries. Their life is poor enough, and often a motor-cycle (if not a motor-car) is a matter of pure necessity for them. Again I do not think that a villa on the hills is a luxury for teaching Orders and Congregations, as past experience has abundantly shown. But a penitent and contemplative Order would not have the same needs, for its object would be different. And so its spirit of visible detachment and penance will forcibly bring home to the Hindu the ideals of the Poverty of Christ and of the Mortification of Calvary, in a manner to which we can scarcely aspire. That this should be especially necessary in India, people in the West will not, perhaps, realize as fully as those who have spent many years in this vast country, and have endeavoured to study and understand the life and mentality of its inhabitants.

I hope the chapter where Judaism and Christianity are compared will not be deemed out of place, for it affords an opportunity of touching upon some very important social aspects of Christian Sanctity.

It may be said that I am perhaps unfair to Protestantism. But, save the Heresiarchs, whom I treat no worse than they deserve, I do not think I am hard on any Protestant in particular. As to Protestant systems and errors, I certainly

condemn them, and here in India even more strongly than I should have done in Europe or in America. For, though some are of opinion that Protestantism here paves the way to Catholicism, I, for one, believe just the contrary; for Protestantism is mainly responsible for the distorted views on Christianity which prevail in this land, and it serves to confirm the Hindus in their inborn indifferentism in religious matters.

The Objections urged against Catholic Sanctity are reduced to two classes; social and historical. To deal adequately with this matter would have required all the knowledge, tact, delicacy and command of the English Language that Card. Newman possessed. Yet the Essay has been allowed to stand, for it may, perhaps, be an inspiration to others, better equipped than the writer, to deal more successfully with a subject which is as important as it is neglected by Catholic Apologists.

The three—or should I say, four—chapters on Christian Asceticism, on Mysticism and Miracles, and on the Religious Life, deal with the more intimate, and therefore most important, aspects of Christian Sanctity, with which even good Catholics are often unacquainted or ill-informed.

I trust no one will be over severe with the Essay on the Saints. Evidently the chapter has been inspired by that excellent work of H. Joly—"*The Psychology of the Saints,*" which should be read by all who wish to understand the mentality of the Saints, who so profusely adorn the Catholic Church.

The last chapter deals with that most consoling dogma—"*The Communion of Saints;*" and a brief description of Raphael's masterpiece "*La Disputa del Sacramento*" brings the book to a close.

I feel the chief defect of these Essays is the superabundance of matter, so that each chapter should have been developed into a good-sized volume, instead of being crammed

within ten or twenty pages. Then, what is barely hinted at could have been treated more fully; difficult facts and events could have been traced to their sources and followed in their historical evolution; objections could have been stated more at length and answered with greater breadth of outlook and deeper understanding.

But all this others may attempt and accomplish more successfully than I can ever hope to do. My aim throughout has been to convince the reader of the divinity of Christian Sanctity, to show it living in the Catholic Church, to insist on its strength and fecundity, to describe its breadth and harmony, and I trust I have not entirely failed.

Now I beg to conclude with an apology for the uneven style and poor language in which I have dared to present these studies. They were begun in 1918, and they have been finished early in 1929; for I could devote but little time to them. In fact they have been written mainly during those few hours which I could snatch from my class-work, and other more pressing occupations. What wonder then if the style is uneven?

As to the language—my excuse is that English is not my mother-tongue; and I know what a lame excuse that is.

Yet, I thought that was not a sufficient reason why a Missionary should renounce to use the little English he has, and thus deny himself an opportunity of bringing Christ nearer to so many who do not know Him—especially when all other means of doing so are unfortunately denied him.

Reprehendant grammatici, sed intelligant populi, I shall repeat with St. Jerome; and I am sure the English Grammarians will not be too hard on me.

D. F., S. J.

January, 1930
The Jubilee Year of St. Aloysius' College,
Mangalore.

CHAPTER I

THE PURELY HUMAN CONCEPTION OF MORALITY

Law and order are among the most striking characteristics of the Universe. Physical laws, some of which have been laboriously discovered in the course of ages, regulate all the phenomena of the mineral kingdom. As we enter upon the threshold of life, physical and chemical laws still hold sway; yet they are caught up by a higher force, whose undeniable teleologism forms one of the most fascinating problems of Biology and Physiology. But if we investigate the nature of man's sensations, memory and imagination, the mystery deepens in proportion to our endeavours to compare and coordinate them with his affective and intellectual activities. Prominent among these stand out his moral conceptions, his ethical notions and judgments, and that moral law, which directs him to the attainment of the ideal in his conduct and behaviour.

Man is first attracted by a moral ideal, dimly perceived, no doubt, but all the same inviting and strong. He no sooner perceives it, than he already feels drawn to it, and desires to realize it in his life. Difficulties arise which he seeks to overcome; he rejoices when he is victorious; he cannot suppress a sense of disappointment and failure, when he yields to what he regards as unworthy of a man. Then as his powers of reflection develop, he tries to supply his ideal, such as it is, with a rational basis; he attempts to discover its correlations with both his individual and his social life, he aims at determining its genesis, and its results, in order to justify, if possible, or to discard altogether its claims. At the same time he endeavours to unravel its contents; he sifts them, rejecting some as mistaken illusions, and cherishing others

as priceless treasures, which alone seem to make life worth living.

The study of these gropings of mankind, of these efforts to solve the moral problem, though most attractive, belongs to other fields ef research. It will be sufficient for my purpose, I believe, to trace its barest outlines, and indicate the chief conceptions of Ethics as we find them in the History of Greek Philosophy, pointing out some analogies that exist between them and the principal Indian and modern European currents of Ethical Thought.

I do not propose to wander beyond the boundaries of Greece and India; for that would be quite outside the scope of this Essay, and would require deeper knowledge and ampler opportunities than I can ever hope to command. In fact we shall hardly have approached our lips to the cup of Greek Philosophy when we shall have to set it down, called away by the desire to taste of another chalice which contains stronger and purer wine.

For the Greek in general the ground of the moral law lay in the interests of those who made it,—whether gods or men,—and man's natural dispositions, the nature and constitution of his impulses, formed its immediate basis. One should be moral because the good are beloved of the gods, or because virtue wins the esteem of all sane men. Again, our fundamental guide in our moral relations is our human nature, made up of mind and body, of reason and passions, of the spiritual and the material, whose claims the wise man has to balance and harmonize.

The greatest of the Greek philosophers and one of the noblest characters in History, SOCRATES, found in man's insight the objective standard of morality. This insight consisted in an exact knowledge of the things to which human action is related as well as of the subject from which the actions proceeds. "*Know thyself*" was the fundamental condition of morality, and virtue consisted in the knowledge of the "Good."

No doubt, a persistent call on man to look inwards, to examine his impulses, his desires, his motives, to study their genesis and their development, to watch their results and their effects, both on the individual and on society, was noble. Yet the assumption that "if we knew with perfect clearness what the nature of the moral end is, we should inevitably pursue it," was not warranted by experience. That such might be the case in an ideal universe we have no reason to deny; but our home, as we know it, is far from being ideal. All can repeat with perfect truth the words of the poet

"*Video meliora, proboque; deteriora sequor.*"

It is only too possible to know what is good with a tolerable degree of clearness, and yet not to pursue it. Also in his efforts to determine objectively the concept of the "Good" sought by him, Socrates was not successful, though the best among the clever youths of Athens were anxiously searching with him, moved by his collected eagerness and keen critical play; and it was not "*happiness*" exactly, but rather harmonious "*well-being*" that he thought to be the result of virtue and knowledge. Thereby, on the one band he stopped short of the goal, and on the other, he set himself at variance with what experience daily teaches us, namely, that many a virtuous soul is unhappy. That honesty, in the long run, is the best policy, is true—but then we must look beyond the narrow limits of this life.

The tendency to identify knowledge with virtue is to be found, and to a much greater extent than in Greece, in India also. But it should not be forgotten that its philosophical basis is different. Indian thinkers have placed the ultimate reason of all evils—physical and moral—in the ignorance that blinds the individual self to its real identity with the Primal Self or Absolute. This ignorance is made greater by the influence of work or actions done for a selfish end. The veil is removed and Liberation attained by the individual self acknowledging his identity with the Primal Self. Action however, owing to the difficulty of

divesting it from selfish ends, rarely, if ever, leads man to Liberation. This is more surely reached by the withdrawal of the individual from the alluring outer world into the recesses of the inner life, and the dark abyss of the spirit. True knowledge resides there; not the balanced and serene knowledge of Greece, which is the condition of righteous activity and the harbinger of well-being; but the entangled, dark, knowledge of India, which is perfected by the gradual sucking in of all the faculties within the self, and thus finally results in Liberation, whose essence does not consist in happiness, but rather in unconditional, objectless knowledge.

ANTISTHENES defined virtue, "The intelligent conduct of life which alone makes us happy, not indeed through the consequences which it brings about, but through itself." This definition is admittedly vague, and, as was clearly shown by the Cynics—the disciples of Antisthenes—it leads either to *a morality of caprice or to a morality of negation.* In fact, if virtue is the intelligent conduct of life, *my* conduct must finally be regulated by *my* intelligence. But who will vouch that *my* intelligence will be invariably trustworthy, and that its moral notions will always be unimpeachably righteous? If virtue alone makes me happy, is its object anything more noble and desirable than freedom from wants, that freedom which the Cynics tried to carry to its last consequences?

Yet the ideal is beautiful, and "*virtue for virtue's sake*" has appealed also to some modern Philosophers. But one must own that their conceptions are not better supported by psychological analysis, than Antisthenes's could ever be. No self-interest will guide us—they say—or human applause. Only virtue draws us invincibly to itself by the native splendour of its beauty!

Yet how amateurish it all sounds! and how one feels the evil scent of pride pervading these ideas! We perceive in them the self-sufficiency of one whose coffers are full, and who, for the

nonce, is not tossed about by the storms of passions and blinded by the blizzard of need; so he can afford to pronounce himself different from other men, and to doubt whether a true man like himself can ever be found by a careful Diogenes peering with a lantern under the porticoes, and behind the colonnades of Athens. It is certain that reason, when constantly followed, leads to virtue. Only its light is too feeble for the great majority of men, and its warmth is not sufficient to effectively counteract the blasts of passion. And "*virtue for virtue's sake*" is a noble ideal; yet in the concrete, virtue is hidden but too often, and the pressure of life leaves us no leisure to unwrap the veils which cover, or mask, her beautiful countenance.

A similar current of thought pervades Indian philosophical speculation. The *Kriya-Yoga* devotee will obtain individual purity, "by discharging all religious and social duties of his station (*Dharma*), while remaining utterly indifferent and "Unattached" to their fruits." Krishna says to Arjuna: "In works be thine office, in their fruits must it never be; be not moved by the fruits of works; but let not attachment to worklessness dwell in thee." (Gita II, 47).

In India too such ideas have resulted in a *morality of caprice* as can be seen in the exercises prescribed to a Yogin, or the various caste-prescriptions, which have gradually assumed a strictly moral character, and whose violation is regarded as sin by the orthodox Hindu; or in a *morality of negation*, as exemplified in the *Gnana-Yoga*, which is to be achieved by a complete "casting off of all religious and social activities." The aspirant becomes a Sanyasin, a lonely recluse, devoting himself solely to meditation upon the *Samkhyan* distinction between soul or self and matter and not-self. Thus by sheer intellectual effort he may attain to enlightenment, to inspired recognition of the transcendent source of all being.

The Cynics in Greece and the Sanyasis in India are the product of these views—not indeed *ideal* Cynics and Sanyasis,

who have rarely existed out of books, but the *real* followers of the craft, with their contempt for the refinement of polite society, and their vulgar neglect of knowledge and the common decencies of life.

ARISTIPPUS, the founder of *Hedonism*, said that virtue is "capacity for enjoyment" and "right insight" should finally teach us how to enjoy ourselves. The ray of truth hidden in this materialistic philosophy is this, that "doing good must needs bring good," and that goodness and happiness must in the end go together. Unfortunately Aristippus fails to define what the "Good" is and by his insisting on "enjoyment" and "capacity for pleasure" he sinks below the level even of common humanity.

Later on EPICURUS laid great stress on the superiority of intellectual and social pleasures over those of the senses, and pointed out the hedonistic value of self restraint and prudent asceticism, which secure for ourselves the maximum of pleasure. Yet the incurable egoism of these doctrines, which distort and ultimately destroy all benevolence and self-sacrifice and their gratuitous assumption that joy, which is but an effect of the "Good," is its essential constituent, made them disreputable even among pagans.

Nor does the modern Altruistic Hedonism of J. S. MILL, which sets up as the fundamental principle of Ethics "The greatest good of the greatest number," deserve a kinder treatment, though many are carried away by its "philanthropy" which is a poor, a very poor, pagan substitute for "Charity." In fact no general code of morality can be established on the basis of pleasure alone, when no other objective criteria are brought in that will enable us to judge between good and evil pleasures, or merely between higher and lower enjoyments.

So far the Greeks did not transcend nature in their views on morality, and made man the measure and the centre of all things, both in Science and in Ethics. Hence their morality, by being fundamentally anthropocentric, became essentially

relativistic, making the very existence of Absolute Justice and Goodness, doubtful, because unnecessary.

PLATO, however, seemed to break the chains of this narrow anthropocentrism, and thought that the "True Being" was the object of that knowledge which constitutes virtue. When pressed to define "True Being," he set it beyond the changing and the material objects, and gave it some reality, conceiving it as the receptacle of eternal, changeless ideas, of which the idea of "Good" was the highest.

Indian Philosophers also thought that the "True Being" was the object of virtue identified with knowledge. Their "True Being," however was not the *ideal* substratum of the world, it was its *real* basis; it was the "Unconditioned Absolute "underlying all the world's fantasmagoric changes and phenomena. This monistic undercurrent of thought made them neglect, and almost do away with the individual, which after all, was but a hypothetical smile, or a grimace, on the otherwise impassive countenance of the Absolute.

Again, Plato's tendency to the *Universal* made him overlook and almost neglect the *individual*, which in a sense, was absorbed, not indeed by a *Metaphysical Universal*, but by what we may call the *"Social Universal,"* or the *State*, for which alone man was to be educated. Narrow individualistic egoism is done away with, to be substituted with the more powerful egoism of the State; the moral ideal becomes merely social, and its sanctions must needs be mechanical, or to say the least, abjectly bureaucratic. But, if to all this we add Plato's unwarranted assumptions with regard to the soul's conscious existence before our birth, from which it must have derived its notions of perfect equality and goodness and beauty, and his opinion that, "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting," and that we possess the power of regaining such knowledge by reminiscence, we see that his theories are too flimsy to supply a solid basis for our moral conduct. He himself affirmed that

"no man in his senses would believe such things to be literally true;" and yet he did not explain the symbols of those realities which, he held, could not directly be communicated by words.

These Platonic speculations were not congenial to the Greek mind, which with ARISTOTLE reverted to a more human and truer conception of Ethics, and stated the principle that "every being becomes happy by the unfolding of its own nature, and of its own peculiar activity." Man, will, therefore, reach the goal through reason, and reason will lead him to the highest good.

We have thus reached the essentially "ETHICAL PERIOD" of the development of ancient thought, that period which strove to portray the ideal, of the "Wise Man," i. e., of the man whom his insight makes virtuous and happy. His most desirable quality is "to be independent" of the world without, and his goal is "peace of soul," avoidance of passionate agitation, aesthetic refinement, comfortable arrangement of daily life, imperturbability, *ataraxy.* This imperturbability is not to be identified with the ideal of the Indian Yogin. Whilst the Greek and Roman Stoics seek ataraxy as an end, the Yogin seeks it as a means to enable his understanding to perceive the true nature of his "self" and thus attain an undefinable *Nirvana* in the Paramatma or Supreme Self.

It is not to be denied, however, that even the Greeks thought that "avoidance of passionate agitation" would bring them nearer to the Divinity; which, in their view, is not personal and loving, but is rather the Substratum of the Universe, the soul of the apparent phenomenic, the "Great Light"—as *Numenius* said—which kindles the smaller lights of nature, and which, therefore, can be approached without the help of elevating grace.

In modern times, KANT'S ethical conceptions, which are based on the foundations of "duty," approach in severity the Stoic ideal. Yet they leave Stoicism far behind, suffused as they are with the Christian glow. It is to be remarked, however, that "*the categorical imperative*," contrary to the Christian

ideal of duty, does not borrow its unyielding strengh from anything outside conscience. It is not God that gives it the right to unconditional, unreasoned obedience. It stands on conscience alone, and it borrows all its goodness from that which alone is absolutely good—*a good will.* Thus, like Stoicism, Kantian Ethics also is pivoted on man, and may, in a sense, be called anthropocentric; and it gives the same sense of oppression, the same idea of unbending fate, which seems to rob life of the most innocent joys, which are chased away by the stern countenance of an all too abstract and indefinite, but unrelenting, "duty."

This meagre, and necessarily incomplete, outline of the purely human conceptions of morality outside revelation, should stop here. Yet brief mention must be made of another ethical concept, which born in India, has not only filled the land of its birth but has overflowed into the countries further East, and holds in a kind of fascination even a few Europeans and Americans, who are apt to be attracted by what is strange and exotic. I mean the doctrine of BUDDHISM. "Even as the ocean has everywhere but one taste—that of salt—so my doctrine has everywhere but one essence—that of deliverance" so taught *Buddha.* And he attempts to lead us to that, by endeavouring to make us realise the transiency and sorrowfulness of all things, the iron law of cause and effect, and the doctrine of transmigration. This might be called the metaphysical aspect of Buddhism, and no one will deny that it is steeped in pessimism. More consoling is its ethical side, whose essence is contained in the famous "*Song of great blessing*" where Buddhists are exhorted to shun the wicked, to strive to attain self-knowledge, to be gracious, kindly, chaste, temperate, humble and patient.

> "*This is the highest bliss to find*
> *this is the chief blessing of mankind.*"

It would be futile to attempt here an exhaustive criticism of all these various ideas of morality, beautiful sometimes and

inspiring, but rarely, if ever, transcending man. Their chief weakness seems to be this, that, even when they do achieve coherence and comprehensiveness—and that is rare enough—they always lack sufficient sanction, and are therefore inefficacious and futile. Many of the ancient philosophers, but chiefly the Stoics, abound in fine descriptions and ideals of virtue and of the virtuous man, but they hardly take into account the forces that work for evil in us; or if they do, they fail to point out a satisfactory way of overcoming them and reaching the goal. Hence these conceptions never broke through the circle of uppish amateurs who walked through the gardens of the Academy or wove elegant discussions up and down the shady Stoa; they never reached the "*profanum vulgus*" who form the overwhelming majority of mankind and who after all really matter from an ethical and spiritual point of view.

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CHAPTER II

CHRIST'S CONCEPTION OF MORALITY

When ancient thought had thus exhausted itself in striving to define the "Good" and to point out the means of reaching it, a new Teacher came forth to proclaim His Law and to show mankind the way of fulfilling it. According to Him the source of all good and the foundation of all morality is God Himself whom He reveals, not as a universal mind, or an ever-changing force, or an immovable pneuma, but as the Supreme Being, spiritual, transcendent and eternal, who bears us a Father's love. This Father through an act of His Will created man and elevated him to the supernatural state; revealed Himself to him and gave him a Law. He endowed him with intelligence and free-will in order that he might offer Him the tribute of his free love and service, in which alone consists the true glory of God. For, though the sun and the moon, the oak and the reed, the horse and the mule, do the bidding of the Lord, they do so neither consciously, nor freely, and cannot therefore yield true glory to God.

But the first man disobeyed God's command, and offended him. The offence, however, was not confined to the offending Adam alone; in him the whole human race sinned. The sin, personal in Adam, became what is called "Original" in his descendants, for all and each of them derive from Adam a tainted origin. And so man snatched himself away from the bosom of his Father, to follow his own perverse sense. Though God could have justly left man to his fate, He resolved in His great mercy to come to his rescue by sending His only begotten Son for his redemption from sin and hell. The Redeemer will teach us to love God and will help us to attain to the highest good which is the end of all morality. This good, however, will not be a mere abstraction, or a universal idea, or the absolute, which, after all,

is identical with the individual self; it will not merely consist in the unfolding of our nature—it will be God Himself.

And the task of the Son of God will be to take man out of himself and replace him in the bosom of the Father; to re-consecrate man to God, from whom sin has severed him; to give a new orientation to man's moral life, so that the goal of man shall not be the mere development, however high, of man's nature, and the attainment of man's natural goodness and well-being, but the exaltation of man to the divine sphere, and the attainment by him of the happiness of God Himself. This happiness he will attain neither by divesting himself of the phenomenal, nor by casting off his limited and changeful personality in the impossible attempt at discovering the identity of one's individual self with the Divinity.

What then is the message of this new Teacher, who, being the Son of God, loved to call Himself the Son of Man, so as to make it clear that He had not come only to found a new school of thought for a few chosen disciples, but to deliver a message for all men, to gather them all, like lambs and sheep, into one fold?

"And behold one came and said to Him: Good Master, what good shall I do, that I may have life everlasting?" (Matt. XIX).

We seem to listen here to a faint echo of the anxious questions of Plato's disciples, though the environment is different; for the questioner bears the marks of the Jewish character. He is not serenely philosophical like the Greek; no, he is sternly practical, and full of faith in the reality of what he calls "life everlasting."

Jesus's answer is very direct: "who said to him: 'Why askest me concerning the Good?' One is good, God."

Not a changeless idea this, or an abstraction; but the living God of the Jews, one without a second, just, but loving, stern, but with the heart of a Father.

And Jesus goes on: "If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments."

The Jew was accustomed to this word. Yet, perhaps, the young man was puzzled, and would have liked to know more about the relative importance of the 613 precepts which the Scribes had extracted from the Law of Moses. He asked then: What commandments? And Jesus said: "Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother; and, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Was this all? Surely Moses had said all this; and the same had been taught in Athens and in Rome, in Thebes and in Benares. The Buddha's Song of perfect happiness contained all this; and, though not so clear, the doctrine of Antisthenes went even further.

So "the young man sayeth to him: All these (commandments) have I kept from my youth," as perhaps millions and millions had kept them before him throughout the world. He expected something more from the Great Master, and he added "What is yet wanting to me?"

"Jesus saith to him: If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." And when the young man had, heard this word, he went away sad: for he "had great possessions." (Matt. XIX).

This young man would have many followers; many who desire perfection and have not the strength of will to pursue it. And Jesus, who was not a dreamer, knew it, for he told His disciples "Amen, I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." But He knew also of many generous souls, who would strive to live up to His ideals, trusting in God "With whom all things are possible."

It is however, in the *Sermon of the Mount* that we find a perfect synthesis of Christian morality which surpasses the

highest conception of virtue ever attained by ancient seers and philosophers.

First Jesus declares the spiritual nature of His kingdom, and the dispositions required of those who wish to enter it. The fundamental disposition is poverty of spirit, whereby He shows how entirely at variance His own spirit is with the spirit of the world. Then come meekness and patience, thirst for justice, purity of heart, and love of peace, to which is added readiness to suffer persecution in the cause of Christ.

The tree of God's kingdom is rooted in humility; it grows, watered by the patient tears of the afflicted. Its flowers are meekness, mercy, purity of heart and love of peace; and the winds and storms of persecution make it strike deeper root.

In the *second* place, Jesus traces the future work of His disciples in the world. They will purify it, and keep it free from corruption, like the salt, and they will illumine its path towards truth and goodness.

In the *third* place, after having affirmed that he had not come to destroy what was good in man, but to strengthen and sublimate it, that He would not abolish the Old Law, but He would fulfil it, He spoke of what is necessary in order to accomplish it in a manner pleasing to God. Thus He proclaimed His two great Laws, on which He based all our moral life.

The first is the great *Law of Sincerity*, by which mere outward sanctity, the sanctity of the Scribes and Pharisees is utterly condemned and rejected. Our sanctity must be sound to the core, it must reach down to the very soul of our soul. It is only from the spirit within, and not from worldly success or the approval of man, that external actions receive their moral value. We have indeed to be the salt of the earth, and the light of the world; not however, that the glory should be ours, but that they who see our good works may praise the Father who is in heaven. God is as much the author of the inner as the outer man, and

will have service of them both; but chiefly the inner man must be sanctified, for God is spirit, and we must adore in spirit and in truth. It is not merely external uncleanness that must be shunned, but we must pluck anger and all uncleanness from our hearts. "You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you, that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matt. V, 27–28).

The principle of sincerity was not new to the people of Israel; it had been proclaimed by Moses, insisted on by the prophets, and practised by many. But the Pharisees had obscured it; and Jesus Christ never tired of denouncing their hypocrisy, and emphasising the importance of serving God from the heart. It is at this purity, at this genuine and sincere sanctity, that our soul must aim as the acme of its perfection. For God values the human soul infinitely more than anything else in the world, because it has been created to His own image and likeness, and redeemed with His most precious Blood. It has been consecrated, sanctified, and made the living temple of the Holy Ghost. "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel shall save it." (Mark VIII, 35-36).

The second is His *Law of Charity*. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the Publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the Publicans so? Be you therefore perfect as your Father, who is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. V).

This voice, so plain, so strong and so sublime, had never been heard before. According to Xenophon, *Socrates* taught that it is best to be beforehand with our enemy in inflicting injuries. " That man seems to be worthy of praise" he says, " who forestalls his enemies by ill-treating them, and his friends by being first in rendering them service." Though *Plato* makes him say to Crito: " To none must we render injustice for injustice, or evil for evil, no matter what injury they may have inflicted on us." But, as has been rightly remarked, Socrates is dominated by the idea of justice and not by the sentiment of love. According to him, under no circumstances may the just man requite evil with evil; but his motive must be not love for his enemy but respect for himself.

Plato's pupil, *Aristotle*, writes that meekness is the medium between two defects: anger *per excessum*, irascibility *per defectum*. And he adds, in his well-balanced way: " For not to get angry, whenever it is proper to do so, seems to be the part of the unwise; similarly it is foolish not to be angry at the proper time, and with those towards whom it behoves us to be so. Such a man seems in fact to have no sense· · · · And since he does not grow excited, he is not easily moved to repel injuries. But to allow oneself to be affected by injuries, and not to care that those who belong to one are so affected, is slavish."

Beautiful words, no doubt, and worthy of a Philosopher. Yet how far we are from the divine, " Do good to them that hate you!" *Hillel*, the Babylonian, the famous Rabbi who lived and taught a few years before Christ, once said: " Do that to no man which thou hatest; herein is all the Law." Even here, however, the precept, though nobly expressed, is too cautious to leap over the bounds of a mere prohibition, and say not only do not do unto others that which thou wouldst not have done to thyself, but go and return good for evil.

In *Leviticus* we read: " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

But who is thy neighbour? Not thy enemy, but thy fellow-towns-man, who is of the same race as thyself, who may be of service to thee. Yet thou oughtest to love the foreigners also who live in thine country; for wast thou not a foreigner in the land of Egypt? Will not such love and consideration be of some advantage to thee? Wilt thou not avoid trouble by behaving thus? Wilt thou not then deserve thy Father's love?

And I am sure many among the people understood and kept the commandment. But later on, the righteous Pharisee would forget it; and so the Master reminds him of it in that beautiful parable of the Good Samaritan, where the noble ideals of the Mosaic Law are both fulfilled, and surpassed at the same time.

The novelty, however, of Christ's Law of Charity stands out most prominently in the words which he addressed to the Twelve on the night preceding His passion and death: "A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John XIII, 34).

Notice the urgent appeal of that touching repetition: "That you also love one another." It is the last night of His mortal life, which He spends with them. Judas has left; the Father is alone with His "little children" and oh! how He desires to pour His own love into their hearts. "As I have loved you!" His love has been so pure and disinterested and patient! Could their love ever be like unto His love?

The Prophets of old had spoken of God's love for His people in the dearest terms; they had used the same expressions which consecrate the bridal love; they had affirmed that, tender as is a mother's love, God's love for Israel was even tenderer. And the Apostles had experienced it in a manner most sweet and touching. For over three years God Himself had been with them, had covered them with His loving wings, had shielded them, had cherished them as the apple of His eye. Now He wanted them to love one another, as He had loved them. "By this shall

all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John XIII, 35).

The Jews at the time of Jesus often discussed as to which was the greatest commandment in the Law. Some held it was the commandment to offer Sacrifice in the Temple; others the Sabbath observance; others again, that of Circumcision. But Christ, the poor Carpenter of Galilee, swept aside all these opinions, and proclaimed that all sanctity must be based on love, the love of man and the love of God.

Indeed, the great commandment to love God Almighty was often repeated in the Law; but Jehovah was too high, he dwelt in light inaccessible, and poor mankind found it too difficult to rise above feelings of adoration, dependence and resignation to God's mysterious will.

In the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy it is written: "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Yet how many defections in the history of Israel! how often the people turned to strange gods! And idolatry was so easy, because their God could not be seen. The Almighty had promised to the people that He would make them abound in all the works of their hands. "In the fruit of thy womb, and in the fruit of thy cattle, in the fruitfulness of thy land, and in the plenty of all things." He had made His great command "not above thee, not far off from thee."

Still how many would forget, and fall away! "I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before thee life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose therefore life, that both thou and thy seed may live." (Ibid).

The appeal is passionate. Motives of love, and self-interest, and fear, are all touched upon. The people would respond! They would often raise their eyes to heaven and pray for mercy and trust, and offer up their thanksgivings and their joyous

psalms. However, God still remained invisible, and a defection would not be without its excuse; impertinent, no doubt, and insufficient, still with a certain semblance of plausibility. Now in Jesus Christ, God Almighty wishes to make a last appeal, and that, most tender and inspiring. Filled as He is with eternal love, burning with charity for man, He sends His only begotten Son, first weak and lovable as a child, later, merciful, patient and loving as a man, in order to conquer the love of man.

As the Prophets and Seers of olden times had done, not only does Jesus teach us to call God our Father, who loves us with a love, pure and wholly disinterested, who ever thinks of us with watchful Providence, who gives us our daily bread, and clothes us, and heals us, and forgives us our sins; but He makes the Father visible, as it were, and He shows in Himself the flaming furnace of tho Father's love. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1, 18). Just as one day He said to Philip, one of the Twelve: "Philip, he who sees me, sees the Father also." So He could have said: "Philip, He who loves me, loves the Father also" for "I and the Father are one."

It was written in the Law: the precept to love and serve God, i. e., "This commandment that I command thee this day is not above thee, nor far off from thee; nor is it in heaven that thou shouldst say: Which of us can go up to heaven to bring it unto us, and we may hear and fulfil it in work? Nor is it beyond the sea: that thou mayest excuse thyself, and say, which of us can cross the sea, and bring it unto us: that we may hear and do that which is commanded? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." (Deut. XXX).

Yes, the commandment was nigh; but God dwelt in heaven, and it was difficult to realize His presence. Some did so; and St. Paul, who speaks of them with great enthusiasm, and

enumerates the triumph of their faith, says: "The world was not worthy of them." (Hebr. XI). But they were few, and confined mainly to one people.

Now in Jesus Christ, "The word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us." He became incarnate for all, that all might love Him, and realize how near He is to us, and how He loves us. In Him, it is not only the commandment of love that is near, but God Himself. We may not excuse ourselves now, and say: God is in heaven, and who can go up to heaven, that we may know Him and love Him—for He is near us, and He has become like unto one of us.

And His love has been made manifest in the only way that can really touch our hearts, that is the way of suffering and sacrifice. "God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son" (John III, 16). Jesus then is God's supreme invitation to man to love Him; not an invitation couched in words, but written with living Blood. "For God sent not His Son, into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him." (John III, 17).

It is clear now that Christ was not merely a creature; that His ideal was not merely one of the many ideals that had flowered and withered here on earth. He had come into the world not only to teach man how to be good, but to save him from sin, and show him how to be holy. Different from the Greek and Roman ideals, Christ's ideal of perfect holiness does not merely comprehend human moral excellence. It insists on man attaining to the divine excellence or sanctity through a complete victory over sin, and through a real sharing of the divine life and perfection, by faith, hope and love.

When, therefore, we speak of Christ's system of morality, we use a term which does not fit the thing we wish to signify; we put the new wine into the old bottles. Christ's Ethics is not a system, it is a life; and though it embraces whatever is good in human ethical conceptions, it transcends them all. The latter

are like a mirror which reflects the beauties of nature, and often like a curved mirror, which distorts what it reflects. Christ's system is like a living eye, which does not merely reflect nature, but also reveals the life of the spirit.

However, let it not be forgotten that Christ has also solved the great problem of morality, which has ever exercised man's minds. Before Him, and outside the Jewish world, religion and morality never had a strict and necessary connection. He bound them together in such a way that they should form a living whole; religion being the spirit, ethics the body of our moral life. For Him too the ethical law is based on human nature; however, only as far as human nature is a reflection of the Divine Nature. According to Christ also, we should be moral, because being moral brings about the harmonious unfolding of our faculties and powers; these however, are caught up by a new spiritual stream, which will take them into the ocean of the Divine Life. He also taught that morality brings final happiness—but the happiness it brings in this world is based on what no moralist had ever suspected: on poverty, on meekness, on peace, on sorrow; and the happiness it brings in the future life is the happiness of God Himself. The ethical. ideal is not an illusion or a creation of the spirit; it is realized in the historic Christ, in the God-Man. And man will never be moral according to God's perfect ideal, unless he catches up within himself some rays, at least, that stream from the Heart of the Son of Man.

But, let us enter a little more into details, and let us briefly indicate the essential points of the Religion of Christ, as we have pointed out the essentials of Christ's Moral Law.

The foundation of the movement of the "human" towards the "divine" as it was conceived by Christ, and as all religion should necessarily be, is a new energy implanted in man's mind—Faith—its impelling force is analogous to the force which sustains all human activities;—Love—, and its directive principle is the ever present reality of the historic Christ, who could call Himself the "Way," the "Truth" and the "Life."

Only through faith, love and imitation of Christ, can man fulfil God's plan, and reach the perfection of his moral being.

Thus the entire conception of morality is changed. It is no more "Be good and live according to your reason." But "To be good you must live according to Divine Reason." "*Estote perfecti sicut Pater vester coelestis perfectus est.*" It is not centered in man, it is pivoted on God; it is not anthropocentric, it is theocentric.

And to make this possible, to bring God into the very centre of the soul, to manifest His will to us, to show us His plans and designs, which He expects us to fulfil, Christ the Son of God—lives in us and teaches us; His spirit "suggests to us all truth" in the sanctuary of the soul, and confirms this truth, and guarantees its divine origin through an external, visible and infallible authority.

Of course, the theocentric ideal which was substituted for the anthropocentric ideal could not become real, except by the redeeming of man from the powers of evil, and by elevating him to the divine order and life, thereby undoing the fell results of the sin of our first parents. Therefore redemption from sin, and a sharing of the divine life was the goal Christ set before man's moral and religious aspirations; and He pointed to Himself as the only way of reaching it.

And clearly, since the goal was so much above human nature, human nature had to be intimately transformed and made capable of attaining it. A new birth was to be the necessary preliminary to the attainment of such an end; a new birth, which implies death to sin, and the mystic sowing of a new life in man. Christ spoke of it when He told Nicodemus: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." (John, III).

All who want to reach the divine consummation that Christ sets before them have to be born again. But this new life has to be sown in them through visible rites and ceremonies, which not only symbolize, but also efficiently produce in the soul the supernatural graces and helps that are necessary for living that new life. The same external rites aim at uniting "the new born" into a social organism, whose object is to bring men to God, not merely as individuals, but also in as much as they are members of the family, and of the State. Thus the family and the State also are consecrated to God, Who is the supreme Ruler and the King of kings, and whose rights are not circumscribed within each living spirit, but have necessarily to assert themselves in Society as well.

The life to which "the new men" have been born must be fostered in them in order that it may reach its highest development. The function of the parent, besides the begetting of the child, is also its up-bringing. And Christ gave us the means of nourishing the life implanted in us through "water and the Holy Ghost" and of making it grow. Just as natural food preserves our natural life, so a divine food was to maintain our life divine. In the VI Chapter of St. John Jesus speaks of this marvellous nourishment: "Amen, amen, I say to you: Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.... I am the bread of life .... I am the living bread.... If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread which I give is my flesh, for the life of the world...."

Indeed the bread of Christ, or better, Christ "the Divine Bread" is not merely truth, the food of the intellect, and love, the nourishment of the soul, and grace, the sustenance of the spirit, but He is more than this. For, *that* partakes of the nature of a gift, whilst *here* we have the Givor of all gifts in His Body and Soul and in His Divinity, who unites Himself with those that are His own in a real union, and assimilates them, and transforms them, by a miracle of love, into Himself,

By this means another purpose will be served; that is to say, God Almighty will thus remain perpetually among men, through the sacramental presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, Thereby the fundamental deficiency of the ancient law will be remedied, which did surely place the *precept* to love God "nigh unto us," but left the *object* of our love too remote and difficult of realization for weak human beings.

God by infusing this new life in us did not take away our freedom to do good and evil. The freedom of man was elevated, not destroyed; it was made capable of choosing the "Divine Good" or of losing it. Only the loss was not to be irreparable, there was to be a means of curing man's moral sickness and of engrafting him again into the living vine from which his waywardness might sever him. In the physical order all living beings whose vitality is not exhausted, have the power to renew worn out tissues, to heal sores and wounds; so in the moral order instituted by Christ there was to be a means of healing our moral wounds and curing our moral disease. And we read of Christ giving His Representatives here on earth the divine power to forgive sin and to reconcile us to God. This power was first to be exercised with each individual conscience. Yet Christ wanted His Representatives to exercise a wider power of reconciliation also for the whole of Society. Their kingdom was not to be of this world, yet it had to exert a tremendous influence on all the kingdoms of the world, inspiring them to frame laws according to justice, repressing their lust of war and conquest, withstanding their encroachments on the rights of the weak, being for them a kind of divine ferment, which should rouse their activities, too often dormant, in the cause of justice and goodness; or a light set on the candlestick, to illumine them, unobstrusively, but efficaciously, in the maze of ignorance and error which so persistently tries to hinder their progress towards the establishment of harmony and peace.

All this is as it were the essence of the new moral and religious ideal, which Christ has brought to man. It is the

resurrection of man in Christ and the living of man in the Life of Christ that now constitutes the new ethical perfection of man, the new consecration or sanctification of mankind.

It is a new orientation of the whole of society towards the establishment of God's kingdom foreshadowed in the History of the Jews, but not yet fully realized in this world—where not merely the individual, but cities and nations, should acknowledge the rights of God, and strive to fulfil His desires.

But this lighting up of the human by the divine has not destroyed the distinction that will always exist between the two, nor the relations arising therefrom between God and man.

The most important of all is the relation of dependence, which everywhere has been outwardly expressed by the offering of sacrifice to the Divinity. Since, however, a new life had been communicated to the followers of Christ, it was to be expected that they should acknowledge their dependence upon God in a new manner, by a new Sacrifice. So we read again in the Gospels that Christ instituted this new Sacrifice, in which He Himself—a true God and a true man—is offered up to God; and He gave power over His Sacred Body to a new Priesthood, which had to offer His Body and His Blood in His remembrance till the end of time.

In this way the new and sublime consecration of man to God, his true sanctification, seemed complete.

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CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN SANCTITY AS PRESENTED IN THE EPISTLES OF SAINT PAUL

Christ, the Son of God, who had become man to accomplish the sanctification of man, ended His career after a short period of time, leaving His Apostles to carry on His work. Still, since the work was wholly divine, He could not leave them alone to fulfil it. He had to be with them and with their successors till the consummation of the world.

In fact, in reading the ancient apostolic writings, we cannot fail to be impressed by the conviction the Apostles had of Christ's indwelling in them and in their followers, of Christ's vivifying the Church and linking it to God. As the soul vivifies our bodies so Christ gives life to the faithful; as the soul gives unity and harmony to the minute cells which make up our organism, so Christ unifies and harmonizes the Christians.

Yet, though their lives were transformed in Christ Jesus, and their ideals were suffused with the splendour of His doctrine, the first Christians remained men that lived with their families and moved constantly in the society of their friends and relatives, whose conception of life was altogether different from their own. It was unavoidable therefore, that they should be strongly influenced by the Jewish atmosphere, in which they had been brought up. Christ had, as it were, lifted them on a high mountain, from which the view was ampler, where they breathed a purer air, and contemplated a more serene and beautiful sky. But it took some time for their poor lungs to adapt themselves to the quicker breathing, which the new situation demanded.

Among the various attitudes of mind discernible in the early Christians one there is that soon assumed considerable proportions. The first followers of Christ were Jews. Now the Jews were the chosen people, the children of the promises, those who had remained faithful to the true God throughout the ages, though there had been from time to time defections of considerable portions of the nation. What wonder then, if a good number of those who had believed in Christ, still regarding the Messias as peculiarly their own, felt inclined to look down on the Gentiles, who were entering the Church, as mere step-children, who really did not belong to the House of God, in whose veins did not flow the blood of Abraham, and desired that the ordinances of the Law, and chief among them "Circumcision," should be observed by all, as a condition, an earnest and a seal of salvation?

How dangerous this Messianic conception was! These Judaizing Christians foiled the universality of Christ's message, they overlooked and were driven even to deny the transcendence of God's mercy, of that God who had come to save us all, not as if rewarding our merits, but out of the immensity of his loving grace; they seemed to empty of its value the redeeming Blood of Christ.

But the Providence of God gave to the Church St. Paul, a Jew of the Jews, who had even been a persecutor of the followers of Christ. His mission would be to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and fulfil what Simeon had prophesied of Jesus, namely, that Jesus would be a light to illumine the world, no less than the glory of His people Israel. Thus Paul had to force the Jews to admit that several of their cherished conceptions regarding the Messias had been carnal and erroneous, and that in fact they had filled up the guilt of their fathers by shedding His Blood. Again, he had to persuade them that the Law, which God Himself had delivered to Moses on the heights of Sinai, had to be succeeded by the loftier and more spiritual Covenant of their Victim. Finally he, a Jew, hateful and despised, had to leaven the mass

of heathenism, to purify that "fen of stagnant waters" that was Rome, corrupted to the core, swarming with parasites and impostors, terrorised by insolent soldiers and monstrous despots, degraded by superstition, disgraced by sensuality, and withal haughty and proud and contemptous of all that was not Roman and Greek. But Paul relied on the omnipotent grace of God, and set out on his missionary journeys with but a few disciples, to preach "Christ and Him crucified, a scandal to the Jews, and a folly to the Gentiles." And he wrote his immortal Epistles, which surpass in breadth and intensity anything written by Seneca; one chapter of which is worth all the purest and noblest precepts of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. (Cfr. Farrar, St. Paul, passim).

We shall not attempt to follow the Apostle in his untiring peregrinations through Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia and Italy; nor shall we describe the persecutions he had to endure from his brethren, the stripes he received, the calumnies that were uttered against him, the chains he was loaded with, his perilous flights, and finally his glorious martyrdom under Nero. We shall rather try and give a glimpse of his interpretation of Christ's message, so noble and inspiring, so rich and novel, so entirely free from the disfiguring influence of contemporaneous philosophies and decaying religious systems. And even such a brief account will be restricted to what is more directly ethical in his teaching. I shall leave aside his strictly theological and christological doctrines.

Faithful in every respect to the teaching of the Master, St. Paul views the whole human race "dead" to God's friendship, fallen away from his grace, exiled from his family, enslaved to the powers of evil. But, if all have died in Adam, who by his sin thwarted God's magnificent plan, in Christ Jesus all shall be vivified. In the words of the Apostle: "God commendeth his charity towards us; because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us; much more, therefore, being now justified in his blood, shall we be saved from wrath

through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled, shall we be saved in his life." (Rom. V).

This salvation is not a "mechanical" readjustment of values, or an "economic" redemption from slavery, the price being paid down to the slave-owner. Being initially accomplished in Christ, as in the fountain-head, through His passion and death, it is hence derived to us by the operation of God's grace with which we freely co-operate according to the ways Jesus Christ has pointed out. In Him we die to the "old man," and we overcome "the flesh" that enchains the spirit, and prevents its flight to God; we are "buried together with him by baptism into death," in order that by His virtue we may rise again "made alive unto God." (Rom. VI).

The question, however, presents itself, how such a resurrection through baptism is to be accomplished in us; how we are to be raised again to the supernatural status of friends and sons of God.

Christ had already given the answer, which St. John has preserved for us in the XV chapter of his Gospel. There the notion is suggested that we have to be engrafted in Christ, and be one in Him, as the branches are one in the vine. Thus our life will be divinized and our actions will be made pleasing to God. St. Paul, while insisting on the same idea, makes use of another simile. He compares the life of the faithful in Christ to the life of the limbs in the body. "For as in one body we have many members .... so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." (Rom. XII).

This grand idea underlies and explains many other conceptions of St. Paul. Like a powerful and warm current, which, starting from the tropical seas, spreads out through the oceans, and modifies them to such an extent that new and varied forms of life can develop where the waters would otherwise be barren, and the climatic conditions of islands and even continents are affected by it, so the Pauline conception of the faithful who are one body "in Christ Jesus" runs through most of his Epistles, and gives a new

meaning to old ethical and moral ideas, whilst some others it quickens and vivifies altogether.

To give a few illustrations:

Sin is not merely going against human reason, and consequently lowering our dignity. It is not merely a jarring note in the harmony of the universe, as Socrates or Plato might have conceived it. It is not only an offence against God, who loves us and expects our loving service in return, as Moses and the Prophets so insistently pointed out. It is something more revolting still. For, by sin, a member rises up in anger or contempt against its own body, and strikes at the immediate source of its life and strength. Listen to St. Paul; after having excommunicated the incestuous adulterer of Corinth, he admonishes the faithful to purge out the old leaven, and to abhor the evil of impurity and fornication; "Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid." (I Cor. VI). Christ's ineffable purity, of whose mystical body the faithful are the members, makes this particular sin all the more nauseating and repellent. There are other failings, however, which assume a blacker hue from the fact that the faithful belong to Christ's body. Chief among them is the sin of hatred and dissension, which in a particular manner tears to shreds the unity of Christ's mystical body.

With what pathetic expressions of love and sadness does the Apostle upbraid the Corinthians for that sin! I speak to you—he writes—"as unto little ones in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not meat; for you were not able as yet. But neither indeed are you now able: for you are yet carnal. For, whereas there is among you envying and contention are you not carnal, and walk according to man?" (I Cor. III).

We often speak of the social body and the body politic. And perhaps some may think that St. Paul's conception does not go deeper, when he persistently repeats that Christians are "one

body in Christ." No; the Pauline conception is much broader and deeper; this, I hope, will become clearer in the course of this chapter.

Indeed, once human society has become Christ's body, all *the social institutions* of mankind automatically belong to that mystical body; they are not suppressed, they are assumed, incorporated, in that supernatural organism; they obtain a new significance owing to the new end to which they are directed, and thereby those human beings for whom the said institutions are meant, perceive their duties with greater clearness and in a new light.

So it is with regard to the nation, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the government, marriage, the family, poor relief, slave emancipation; in short, all these "*entia juridica*" into which the individuals of the human race coalesce, and into which human society is resolvable, are dealt with in St. Paul's Epistles with unequalled depth and loftiness.

In the XII Chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle, speaking of the diversity of spiritual gifts, explains his conception of the mystical body of Christ in a very concrete manner. The body—he says—"is not one member but many" such as the head, the heart, the foot, the eyes, the ears. Some members are feeble, but very necessary; some are less honourable and comely, yet they contribute their share to the maintenance, beauty and strength of the body. Similarly the faithful—the Apostle insistently reiterates—"are the body of Christ and members of member."

Hence the various classes amongst them, and the various offices and positions, all take up their place in Christ's body, thereby conspiring into a higher and most harmonious unity, that could not even be imagined in a purely human society.

So we have the ecclesiastical hierarchy, consisting of the Vicar of Christ, the Bishops, the elders, the deacons, all directing mankind to the attainment of its spiritual end. This is done by

the administration of the Sacraments, the preaching of the word of God, and the external, visible ruling of the Church.

In civil society, but yet within the body of Christ, are rulers and ruled, both "ordained by God," and both linked together, by obedience on one side, and by watchful care on the other. However, the civil obedience of which St. Paul speaks, is not obedience as it was understood by Sparta or Rome; but it is vivified by faith, which shows in the rulers "the ministers of God serving unto his purpose." (Rom. XIII).

And a ruler's care and diligence is not resolvable into a mere political art, such as Aristotle might describe; but rulers too are bound by the laws of the mystical organism to which they belong, and from which they cannot break away without doing injury to themselves, and to the less exalted members whose fate is linked with theirs.

The Renaissance Politicians, whom Machiavelli describes, and the Encyclopaedists of the XVIII century, did away with this restraining principle, and reverted to the pagan ideal of the safety of the State being the supreme law in politics. Thereby they avowedly substituted might for right in their politics, both domestic and foreign, and the guiding principles of self-interest and self-aggrandizement have reigned unchecked, with what awful results for mankind, anybody can see.

The vaunted principle of nationalities, as we understand it, belongs to a later era; however, in its purer forms, it is not contradicted by St. Paul's conceptions. He strongly deprecates what may be called the excesses of nationalism, such as were discernible then in the proud exclusivism of Greeks and Romans towards the Barbarians, and such as would manifest themselves in later times, in the shape of Chauvinism, colour-prejudice, theories of Nordic excellence and so forth. Such unhealthy excrescences stand condemned for ever by the sublime expression "There is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. But Christ is all in all." (Col. III).

These principles were bound to leaven, like a powerful ferment, the mass of Paganism. They were, in fact, almost revolutionary, and subversive, of the old, rotten, state of things. But in the ways of Divine Providence, the revolution was to be gradual and progressive; rather in the shape of a new birth than of a catastrophe.

We have a typical example of such a gradual change of attitude and outlook in the matter of masters and slaves. St. Paul, faithful to the doctrine of Christ, "as long as you did it to one of these my last brethren, you did it to me"—boldly proclaims the principle that both masters and servants are one in Christ Jesus. Yet, with what exquisite delicacy he deals with particular cases! Remember that most tender letter to Philemon; he sends him back his fugitive slave, whom he had converted in prison. "I beseech thee for my son, whom I have begotten in my bands, Onesimus . . . Do thou receive him as my own bowels."

How far we are from the dictum of Aristotle, that slaves were but "the goods and chattels" of their masters! Yet, lest the slaves should be proud, and grow disrespectful towards their masters, in the consciousness of the freedom with which Christ has made them free, the Apostle earnestly exhorts them to obedience. However, it should not be the grovelling deceitful obedience of the bondsman, depicted with living fidelity by Plautus and Terence. They must obey with simplicity, "as to Christ," "doing the will of God from the heart." And the masters again must "forbear threatenings" and foul words and beating, "knowing that the Lord both of them (the slaves) and you is in heaven; and there is no respect of persons with him." (Eph. VI).

But it is the family and especially the relations between husband and wife that afford St. Paul the finest opportunity of applying his doctrine of Christ's Mystical Body. "Let women"—he writes to the Ephesians, Chapter V—"be subject to their husbands as to the Lord: because the husband is the head of the

wife as Christ is the head of the Church." Hence as the union of Christ and His Church is eternal, so only death can sever the union of husband and wife. As Christ is united to only one Church "which is his body," so the husband is united to only one wife; "and they shall be two in one flesh." "As Christ loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it," so the husband must love his wife, and be ready to give up everything and make all sacrifices for her sake.

I think any association of this lofty doctrine of Christian marriage with the conjugal theories, or with the married life of even the best among pagans, like Socrates and Cato, is blasphemous. In St. Paul we have all the sweet purity of dawn, arising full of life and hope, over the murky waters of pagan corruption.

I have hinted above at the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is the institution that visibly shows how human society has become the body of Christ. But here something must be added about that wonderful organization of helpers which did so much in spreading the Kingdom of God, and where the organic unity of the early Church appears to great advantage.

Besides the seven Deacons, " men of good reputation, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom " that were ordained by the Apostles to attend to the bodily needs of the widows and the poor, in order that these should not be neglected, and the Apostles should have more time to give " themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word," (Acts VI), we find Paul appointing Timothy and Erastus to go to Macedonia, and preach there the Gospel of Christ. Titus " his beloved son " is ordained Bishop and left in Crete to consolidate the work which St. Paul had begun. The Ancients of the Church of Ephesus whom " the Holy Ghost has placed Bishops to rule the Church of God " are exhorted to watch, and guard the faithful against " ravening wolves," against men, who shall rise " speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." (Acts XX). St. Paul's loving salutations at the end of his Epistles are full of the names of "his

helpers in Jesus Christ"—bishops, preachers, catechists, and even holy women, who gave hospitality to the ministers of God, who attended to the needs of the Church, who, in short, were "working the work of the Lord."

The VIII chapter of the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians is a fine exhortation to almsgiving, and to help those Christian Communities that are in distress. "In this present time let your abundance supply their want, that their abundance also may supply your want, that there may be an equality, as it is written: He that had much had nothing over; and he that had little, had no want." Just as the nourishment in a healthy organism is so distributed that all the various parts have their needful, neither more nor less, so should it be within the mystical body of Christ. The rich should help the poor with their wealth, and the poor should pray for the rich, that God may bless them all, that they "may abound unto all simplicity."

We may be allowed to call this grand conception of "Christ's Mystical Body" a mother-idea of inexhaustible wealth and fruitfulness. We have indicated some of its moral implications with regard to man considered as a member of society. Not less splendid is the light it sheds on various problems regarding the morality of individuals. We are Christ's, we belong to Him entirely; consequently our thoughts and sentiments must be attuned to His; we must be "of one mind," "of one accord;" that mind must be in us "which was in Christ Jesus," ever ready to do the Will of the Father; gladly humbling ourselves "under the powerful hand of God;" obedient unto Him in everything, as He was obedient "even to the death of the cross." (Phil. II). We are members of Christ's Mystical Body. Hence we must chastise the body and bring it into subjection; not because it is intrinsically evil; but because, owing to sin, "the law of my members fights against the law of my mind, and captivates me in the law of sin." (Rom. VII). Since we are one with Christ, "and Christ crucified," we must also continue His saving sacrifice throughout the

ages, and "rejoice in our sufferings, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in our flesh, for his body, which is the Church." (Col. 1, 24).

The change of perspective from the selfish pagan point of view is complete. Let us eat and drink, let us crown ourselves with roses······

Nunc est bibendum!
Nunc pede libero pulsanda tellus!

What really matters is "to-day," for "to-morrow" we shall die. The Christian on the contrary rejoices in suffering, continues for all time the expiation of Christ, and re-echoes the words "*Beati qui lugent*"—Blessed are those who weep, blessed are those who suffer, for suffering brings salvation. Hence the triumphant cry of the Apostle "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal. VI). The world here means those men who persistently stand up against God, who refuse to be made living members of Christ's Mystical Body. They will not accept Christ's own prayer, but compel Him to divert from them His saving grace, owing to their irreconcilable perverseness. As Christ was despised, rejected and crucified by the world, so shall the Christians be. And they, on the other hand, will despise the world's maxims, scorn its vanities, crucify its charms.

St. Austin, commenting on the Pauline doctrine of Christ's Mystical Body, makes some very appropriate remarks. Suppose a thorn pierces the foot; the whole body is uneasy and suffers, because the foot is aching. Similarly, if a Christian is weak and suffering, all the Christians suffer and sympathise with him. "*Quis infirmatur et ego non infirmor?*" But there is not only sympathy, there is help as well. The back slowly bends towards the aching foot; the hand deftly tries to localize the thorn; the eye is strained to see that a little saliva is spread over the wound to wash it. In like manner, all the Christians are concerned with the misfortunes, both spiritual and bodily, of their

fellow Christians, and try to alleviate them. In this doctrine, Individualism, which was the bane of Paganism, is struck a death-blow. Man ceases to be a poor solitary atom whirled about by inflexible forces, obeying iron laws; he is caught up by the stream of life which issues from Christ's own Heart, and carries him along into the ocean of God's mercy. By endeavouring "to put on Christ," by living united with Him, man's selfishness is gradually overcome, his fears are allayed, the peace and charity and benignity and purity of the Spirit obtain the upper hand over the dark deeds of "the flesh;" he becomes "a new creature," a "new man" living in sanctity and truth.

If these principles had not been forgotten by the world, if the doctrines of Individualism had not been substituted for them, first by the Reformation, next at the time of the French Revolution, last by the Prophets of the XIX Century Naturalism, Society would certainly be happier. The greater part of humanity would not be crushed by a heartless Capitalism, nor driven to despair by senseless competition, which claims to be ruled by laws as rigid as the laws of matter, and blindly refuses to set any value on spiritual principles.

So far I have endeavoured to group St. Paul's ethical teachings round the central conception of Christ's Mystical Body; yet it will be good to enter a little more deeply into the study of the celebrated Pauline doctrine.

What we may call the principle of "solidarity" seems to have been of paramount importance in the mind of St. Paul. As we have seen, the whole human race, was, according to him, contained in the first man, Adam, as in its fountain-head. Created by God in a supernatural state of grace, the whole of mankind lost it in Adam through Adam's sin. Our first parent, however, was to have his counterpart in Christ, the new Adam, in whom mankind was to be reconciled to God. Through Adam sin entered amongst us; grace was given to us through Christ; through Adam we were condemned, through Christ we were

justified. (Rom. V). The new humanity was to be born in Christ, as the old humanity was born in Adam. Hence man's justification in Christ must be accomplished through his living union with Christ. This begins in Baptism, and is consummated in charity.

It is really the charity of Christ that makes us perfect members of Christ's body. Baptism, indeed, unites us with Him; but the union is made vitally complete only through charity. This is not so much our spirit lovingly linking itself with Christ, as Christ's spirit diffusing Himself in our hearts, anointing us with His unction, transforming us into real partners of His gifts, nay even of His divine nature. Just as the members of our own body are vivified by our soul, so the members of Christ's body are vivified by the efficient causality of His Spirit, who, through grace, "informs" us with a new "vital form," certainly not substantial and natural, but affecting the very essence of the soul, and raising it to share the life of Christ supernaturally.

Thus the true Christian can repeat with St. Paul: "I live now, not I; but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. II, 20); and this magnificent expression does not only bear the meaning of a passionate lover's words, who feels the soul of the beloved most sweetly and intimately pouring into his soul, and blending with it. It further indicates a real, though mystical pulsation of Christ's life within his life. And so, "doing the truth in charity" he grows up in Him "who is his head, Christ"; he believes in a union which becomes ever more spiritual and living; he knows that "the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together" is harmoniously built up "in charity." (Eph. IV).

This growth and increase in charity *diminishes fear*, for, whilst he is united with Christ in one body, God surely will not condemn him. (Rom. VIII). It further *makes his prayer more confident* and full of hope; because he knows that the "Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." (Rom. VIII). The most noble members of Christ's body, those who share most

perfectly in His life, share also in a glimpse of His beatific vision, and are raised, even in this life to an experimental knowledge of the mysteries of God. And as life is slowly ebbing away, to all those who have lived in Him, and are now ready to "be dissolved and be with Him," the hope remains that, as He rose from the dead, they too will rise with him, for "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. (I Cor. XV). Their spirits will live and their bodies as well; which, though they are sown in corruption, will rise in incorruption, in glory and in power.

Then death will be overcome, the veils will fall away, "we shall know even as we are known," we shall love with an eternal, ineffable love; and, wedded for ever with Christ, we shall be plunged in the happiness of God, that He may reign, and be "all in all." (I Cor. XV).

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CHAPTER IV

THE CUSTODIAN OF CHRISTIAN SANCTITY

(A)

IN ANCIENT TIMES

In the preceding chapter I have dealt exclusively with the teaching of St. Paul, though I was strongly tempted to borrow from the treasures of St. John, the Apostle of love, of St. Peter and St. James. But the limits I have set to myself forbade me to linger more at length on the doctrine of the Apostles concerning Christian morality and Christian sanctity. The same regard for brevity prevents me now from comparing the apostolic teaching with the teaching of Christ so as to establish their substantial identity. I cannot, however, refrain from pointing out once again how the Christian conception of morality and sanctity is totally different from the Graeco-Roman, or any other purely human conception. According to the latter, man is the centre of moral perfection; according to Christ, God is the centre; because it is towards Him that all our moral acts must finally gravitate. Purely human philosophies assert that the source of ethics is merely human reason; Christianity teaches that the source of ethics is a personal God, who speaks to us through our reason and through His revelation. Philosophy, dissociated from Christ, maintains that the end of man is the happiness which results from the natural unfolding of all our faculties; according to Christ, the end of man is sharing the happiness of God Himself, of which man is made capable by the infusion into his soul of a supernatural life.

The Apostles upheld the ideal of their Master, but one by one they left this world, some dying on the cross as He did, some perishing by the sword, all giving up their lives in testimony of the love they felt for Him, and clinging to the doctrine they

had imbibed from His sacred lips. The Church of Christ had next to steer her course on an uncharted ocean, treacherous in its calms and murderous in its storms. The persecutions of Rome started in right earnest, and the Church had to celebrate her mysteries in places out of the way or hidden underground; she had to enjoin strict secrecy on her children lest worshippers should by hostile irruptions, be disturbed in their devotions and hailed before the court of the City Prefect. Nevertheless, her worst enemy is not the persecutor, but the traitor in the camp. The *Ebionites*, coming to her from Judaism, endeavoured to deprive her Founder of the splendour of His divinity. The *Doketai*, converts from Paganism, were scandalized at the sacred Humanity of our Lord, and, believing all material things to be impure, asserted the unreality of His body. Then the *Gnostics*, while admitting that a double element existed in Jesus of Nazareth, *viz.*, the human and divine natures, denied the hypostatic union. These dogmatic errors are responsible for a double evil, colossal in its dimensions. They not only destroy the very foundations of Dogma, but also bring down with a crash the imposing superstructure of morality.

But there was one point bearing more directly on Sanctity, about which the early Church had to be very careful. She had to avoid laxity on the one hand and exaggerated spirituality on the other. She had to uphold the power of the saving grace of Christ, without destroying the freedom of the will. She had to save the claims of faith to be supported by reason, and at the same time guard against the dangers of excessive free thought and unbridled imagination.

She is conscious of her mission from God, and of her "ministry of reconciliation." Therefore, though she is severe with sinners, she is merciful to penitents. Hers is indeed a community of saints, because all her members are consecrated to God through Baptism and partake of divine nourishment in the Eucharist; but she is such more on account of her sanctity

producing power than of her exclusiveness in the matter of membership. A party soon came into existence which proclaimed that only the pure of heart were the actual members of the Church, and that, if sinners were admitted into her bosom, they would in process of time be the death of her. The *Novatians*, appalled by the awful immorality of Pagan Rome, saw with grief and dismay that even among the faithful some were not strangers to the vices of the world. Extremely desirous of purity, they sought to exclude such entirely from the Church. The *Montanists* held similar opinions, and, eager to lop off the withered branches from the living vine, went a step further. In order to preclude even the remotest danger of infection, they denied to the Church the power to forgive certain heinous crimes, such as murder, idolatry, adultery, fornication and apostasy. They insisted that the perpetrators of such enormities should not be tolerated in the bosom of the Church but be immediately expelled and handed over to Satan "for the destruction of the flesh."

This was indeed zeal with a vengeance, far removed from the meek spirit of Christ. It was neither tempered with His mercy nor sweetened with His charity. In fact, some of these early Puritans, in their dread of possible scandal did not stick at tampering even with the Gospels, from which they tore away certain verses which seemed to them to savour too much of mercy and to transgress the bounds of prudence. But the Church possessed the mind of Christ. Instead of summarily cutting off great sinners from her communion, she imposed upon them, when repentant, a salutary penance whose gravity was in proportion to the heinousness of their crimes, after which she admitted them once more into her favour and fellowship. She existed not only for the just, but for sinners also; she was the mother both of saints and of frail men. Christ had come to save sinners and the Church was instituted to continue His work. Besides, had not Christ Himself foretold that there would be sinners in His

Church, and scandals in His Kingdom, and that the cockle would be mixed up with the wheat?

So the Church proclaimed her healing or sanctifying power to be universal; for, the attempt to limit her power of absolution was in reality an attempt to destroy her power of sanctification. She felt a divine life pulsating in her, by means of which she could generate, grow, break into bud and blossom, and bring forth fruit. What life cannot? But these rigorists would fetter her power and restrain her activities. To say that sinners could destroy her was like saying that individual cases of sickness can destroy cosmic life, or that a cloud can darken the whole of the azure vault above. The early Christian Puritan was like a pessimist who tries to persuade people that there is no life in the world, because in the world there is death also. He gazes at a corpse and is disheartened, forgetting that even a corpse can germinate flowers. The sanctity of the Church can be destroyed by sin, only if she has no power over sin. As long as this power remains uncurtailed, all is safe.

But soon there lifted up its head another heresy which maintained that matter was the origin of all evil, that it was fundamentally bad, and that our endeavours should be directed to freeing ourselves from its contamination. Consistently with this theory, its upholders condemned Matrimony as essentially unlawful. They also taught another blunder of far-reaching consequences, *viz.*, that Christ had never assumed a material body like our own. These absurd tenets were likewise condemned by the Church. For if matter comes from God, how can it be essentially evil? That it may, through our weakness and malice, lead us to evil, cannot be gainsaid. Hence the need for self-denial and mortification; but self-denial is not self-annihilation, and mortification cannot be turned into a means of self-destruction. Virginity is indeed holy, but Matrimony is a Sacrament, a holy thing. Unrestrained passions are dangerous foes, but mere contact with matter is not sinful. Was not our

very flesh sanctified when the Son of God assumed it in the unity of His Person? Are not our bodies temples of God? Are they not destined to a glorious immortality? If matter is essentially evil, and the Son of God had never assumed it, then the life of Christ from Bethlehem to Calvary was an illusion and a lie. He never suffered for us, and we have not been redeemed by His most precious Blood. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, or hanging from the cross, did not pour the balm of His consolation into our wounds, and the merciful Samaritan did not restore us to health and strength.

In course of time there sprung into existence another sect, which rejected or perverted the nature of the saving grace of Christ, as also that of our Redemption. Under the influence of theories from the East, it taught that ignorance was the source of evil, and that *Knowledge* was the true principle of salvation. Christ Himself was merely a Teacher, whose mission was to reveal the Unnameable and to teach mankind the *Gnosis* (knowledge) that would give us mastery over nature and spirit. Mechanical asceticism and a kind of passive contemplation were the means to attain knowledge. *Gnosticism* was perhaps the first heresy which seriously threatened the existence of the Church. Opinions differ as to its origin; but it is certain that its doctrines were the result of fantastic speculations derived from Platonic, Philonic and Oriental systems of philosophy. St. Justin and St. Irenaeus fought successfully against it; and the Church in anathematizing it, maintained the historical character of our Saviour and preserved Christian Sanctity in its pristine purity and simplicity. Again, the Church, always on the side of truth, insisted that the principle of sin is not so much the intellect as the will. She held that Christ is indeed a teacher; but He is more; immeasurably more. He is our Saviour who has redeemed us not merely by the sublimity of His teaching and His example, but also by shedding His life-Blood for us. The work of Redemption was indeed fully accomplished on the heights of Calvary; but its application to individual souls continues and

shall continue as long as there is on earth a single soul to be saved.

Therefore, when the question arose whether her means of sanctification were indissolubly bound up with the purity and sanctity of her ministers, the answer of the Church was clear. She was not holy merely because her ministers were holy. Her sanctity transcended their sanctity. Her power of cleansing, nourishing, strengthening, did not depend on their sanctity and moral worth.

This doctrine was of fundamental importance to a right understanding of the sanctity of the Church, and was an essential pre-requisite to real faith in the efficacy of the Sacraments. It was defended by Pope Stephen against St. Cyprian and a certain number of African Bishops, who, in a Synod held at Carthage in A. D. 255, decided against the validity of Baptism conferred by heretics, and taught that the validity of the Sacrament was dependent on the worthiness of the minister, though they had to admit that ancient custom was against them. The question was authoritatively settled in the right sense by the Synods of Arles (A. D. 314) and Nice (A. D. 325).

The Donatists revived the error, but the Catholic dogma found an invincible champion in the great St. Augustine. His classical words uttered in the first instance with respect to Baptism, hold good for all the Sacraments: "Baptism does not depend on the merits of those who administer it or of those who receive it. Its efficacy depends on its own sanctity and on its own truth, on account of Him who has instituted it for the salvation of those who receive it worthily, and for the destruction of those who receive it with bad and sinful dispositions." (Cfr. Migne 43, 559).

It is sad to think that many of the Reformers of the XVI century have either fallen back into the ancient error of the Donatists, or have ignored this vital point of Catholic doctrine. Others have absurdly insisted on the state of grace as a necessary

condition to holding or exercising jurisdiction even in secular governments.

But the Church of Christ has consistently rejected these perversions both of sound doctrine and commonsense. Certainly the vocation of her ministers is sublime and holy. She gives them a good grounding in sprituality; protects them from dangers; insists on their shunning the vanities of the world. Should they by their evil conduct scandalize the faithful she punishes them severely according to the gravity of their fault. She sets before them the ideal of Christ Himself; she preaches to them that a priest of Christ should be another Christ, for he continues the work of the Redeemer. Nevertheless, the essential grace of each Sacrament is in no way dependent upon the personal sanctity of the priest, who is only an agent for, or the minister of Christ. The principal Minister, the Author and Source of the grace conferred, is Christ Himself. The light of the sun is coloured differently by passing through different media, but the life-giving light of the Church is essentially independent of the moral character of her priests. The vivifying Blood of Christ does not lose its virtue by passing through infected channels; nay, its virtue appears all the stronger because it can give life, and heal, not only the far-off cells of the organism, but the very cells of the arteries that distribute it. Its virtue is not from the arteries but from the heart; and the Heart of the Church is Christ Himself. "I am with you all days till the consummation of the world."

All the attempts we have mentioned so far, either to limit Christian Sanctity, or to distort its nature, pale before that insidious heresy, which, rising in the West, entered into the very heart of Rome, and, under cover of fair words and ambiguous expressions, endeavoured to persuade the theologians of the Church that her very soul was a phantom, and that she did not live of the life of Christ. *Pelagius*, was in fact trying to destroy the very foundations of the supernatural order by insisting on its identity with the natural order. He taught that man could by

his natural powers alone, avoid all sin and thus finally arrive at eternal bliss. But if we can by ourselves overcome sin, where is the need of a Redeemer? And if grace is done away with, what remains of the Church but an empty shell? The Gospel becomes a mere moral code, sublime in parts, but far from being systematic and exhaustive; and Christian Sanctity can hardly be distinguished from human morality.

God, however, was watching over His Church, and raised the genius of St. Augustine to fight the errors of Pelagius as he had fought the perversions of Donatus. Whilst man's freedom and his physical power to keep the moral law was safeguarded, the necessity of grace as a healing and elevating energy was vindicated. Grace is not nature; it is above nature, and nature has no absolute claim to it. It is not something merely external, like the preaching of the Gospel; it is internal as well. It is an illumination of the mind, an invitation to the will either to eschew some evil or to embrace some good; it is an added strength and power to the will to perform its duty with ease and pleasure. But St. Augustine, deservedly called the Doctor of Grace, did not fight his battles alone. The Popes Innocent, Zosimus and Celestine stood by him in his encounters with the enemy. The Pelagian heresy was finally condemned by the whole Church at the Council of Ephesus (A. D. 431).

(B)
IN LATER AGES

Attitudes of mind analogous to the opposite tendencies of the Stoics and the Epicureans of antiquity, constantly make their appearance in the history of the Church. Again, exaggerated intellectualism, or pronounced sensism, blind fideism or all-dissolving rationalism, recur throughout the ages with striking regularity. After having allowed himself all the licence of laxism, man, frightened, as it were, by his own excesses, springs back to the ruthless intolerance of puritanism; or, carried away for a time

by the tide of external success and outward activity, he hastens to build for himself a bower of rest with the deceptive materials of quietism; or, fearful of the ruins accumulated by unbridled rationalism, he sinks into the stagnant pool of scepticism, or tries to discover a haven of peace in the impulses of the heart, relying on the dictum that the latter sees further than the intellect, and that the more surely, because it is free from wearisome logical processes. But through the centuries the Church keeps watch from her lofty towers; and, as she did from the beginning, she continues to point unflinchingly to the royal road which, without turning to the right or to the left, leads straight to God.

It is not my object to speak of every heretical movement that has stirred the waters of Church history in the twenty centuries of her existence, for I do not wish to trespass on the fields of History proper or of Controversial Theology. My aim is rather to give a bird's eye-view of the struggles which Christian Sanctity has had to encounter, and to show the superb generalship of the Catholic Church in the conduct of that difficult war.

We have then touched on four great currents of thought, which threatened to pollute the crystal purity of the waters of holiness.

The first current, hard and cold, springs from Montanus and Novatian. The second and the third, both foamy and misty, derive their strength from Eastern Theories as to the origin of matter and of evil, on the one hand, and as to the sufficiency of knowledge to attain salvation, on the other. The fourth current flows more softly and equally though it is no whit less dangerous. In its various ramifications it may be likened to a network of irrigation canals, which seem to hold out a promise of fertility to the country-side independently of the rains from heaven. Likewise does *Pelagianism* lend itself to an exaggerated view of our natural powers and to a consequent denial of the absolute necessity of grace.

Now, discounting innumerable differences of detail, due to changes in the historical background, we find a parallel to the errors of Montanus in the Puritans of the Reformation period, and in the Jansenists of times nearer to our own. They show the same forbidding harshness and narrow-mindedness, the same insistence on the wickedness of human joys, the same sternness towards that great part of mankind which is still outside the fold of the Church. They extol God's justice and forget His mercy ; they so exaggerate man's unworthiness, that he ceases to be the handiwork of God. Even the Crucifix, the symbol of mercy, becomes for them a symbol of terror, and they fancy that the blessed Eucharist, the Sacrament of love, is most fittingly treated when we keep at a respectful distance from it.

Perhaps this was but a natural reaction against the Paganism of the Renaissance, and the Libertinism of the XVI and XVII centuries. Many ignorant people were deceived, and others, who ought to have known better, gave to Jansenism the support of their authority. But the Church could not tolerate these frightful distortions of the serene doctrines of the Gospel. While upholding in general the severity of Christian life, she insisted on the sweet reasonableness of God's service. And the Sacred Heart of Jesus, chose precisely these troublous times to reveal even more insistently the mystery of His love and the abyss of His mercy. He invited all to open out in confidence hearts closed by the timid spirit of Jansenism, to re-light in them the sweet flames of His love put out by the icy coldness of the age, and to make honourable amends for the outrages heaped upon Him by the diabolical hatred of His enemies.

The *Abstainers, Encratites* and *Manichaeans* of old find their natural successors in the *Albigenses* of the Middle Ages; and I hope I am not exaggerating, if I detect traces of their errors in the extravagant pleadings of certain modern *Prohibitionists* and Temperance-workers. Those sanctimonious sectarians that appeared under various names in the North of Italy and in the

South of France, condemned Christian Marriage to exalt Virginity. But the fourth Council of the Lateran laid it down that not only Virgins, but also married men and women were pleasing to God through faith and good works and deserved in consequence eternal happiness. Since the liberation of the soul from the captivity of the body was according to the Albigenses, the true end of our being, they commended suicide, chiefly by starvation. The Church, however, teaches that we are essentially the servants of God the whole of our natural lives and that it is a grievous dereliction of duty, before receiving orders, to abandon the post assigned us. It is a fact that when attempts at persuasion failed, a course of severe repression was adopted against these deluded heretics. We should however bear in mind that the penal code in those days was considerably more severe than today, and that excesses then perpetrated are to be attributed more to the indiscreet zeal of secular princes than to the policy of the Popes.

There exists a certain analogy among the *Gnostics* of the beginning of Christianity, the *Beghards* of the fourteenth, the *Illuminati* of the sixteenth century, and the *Quietists* of more recent times. It would be an easy task to catalogue their errors and show the genesis of one blunder from the other. But that would be beside my present purpose, which is only to present a rapid survey of the vagaries of the human spirit within Christianity, with a view to emphasizing the wisdom of the Church in carefully discriminating truth from error, as also her zeal in fostering the former and rooting out the latter.

The *Beghards* held that man could arrive at such heights of perfection as to be capable of enjoying the beatific vision even in this life. There would then be no need of penance and fasting, nor of any endeavour to keep the body subjugated to the spirit; for the flesh would yield ready obedience to all the promptings of grace. *Michael de Molinos*, starting from a different point of view, finally reached the same conclusions. He taught that God

was the sole Agent, and the perfect man, *i. e.*, one that has set his foot on the "inner way," must remain passive, avoiding all activity, and consequently be without desires, fears, anxieties, self-searchings of any kind whatever. He must wholly abandon himself, just as if he were a lifeless body, into the hands of Almighty God, who will do everything that He likes with him, for him, and in him.

We feel inclined to smile at these aberrations of the human mind; but propounded as they were with extreme cleverness, as well as with great unction and a show of spirituality, they easily deceived and led astray many a simple soul. It was only the robust commonsense of the Church of Christ that succeeded in disentangling the golden threads from the woof of perverted imagination and secret sensuality.

Physiologists tell us that life is perpetually up in arms against death which, allying itself with myriads of microbes and bacteria seeks for the mastery in the little kingdom of man. The blood then multiplies its corpuscles, which destroy the poisonous elements abounding in it. In the case of certain maladies, a complete victory often ensures to the patient perpetual immunity. We find a parallel to this in the history of the Church. The few instances I have given show how she fought successfully against the perversions of Christian Sanctity, no matter how subtle they were, or how cunningly they masqueraded under the guise of truth. The Jansenists were past masters of the art; the Quietists were scarcely less proficient in it. Who would not be taken in, for example, by their insistence on the interior life and on the necessity of entire self-surrender to God, who alone acts in His creatures? Who would not be deceived by their constant appeal for complete detachment from all created things, and perfect abandonment to the Will of God?

But there is a wisdom in the Church which is surely more than human. She is never in a hurry to strike, but when she does strike, she strikes unerringly. She is never hasty in

condemning; but she condemns unhesitatingly. She knows how to sift the golden sands. She would not lose the smallest grains of truth, but she wants them unalloyed. That God's activity in our souls is really necessary, no one denies; but it is also true that He will have us co-operate with Him. For as St. Augustine has it: "He that created you without you, will not save you without you."

(C)

DURING THE RENAISSANCE AND AFTER

In course of time there appeared on the scene others who scoffed at the interior life, at contemplation, at those virtues which they glibly called "passive." They extolled at the same time the virile natural virtues above what they preferred to call the weak, nambypamby Gospel types of virtue, such as humility and patience. The Church, however, while adhering to the same eternal dogmas, and faithful to her traditions, did not neglect the new conditions of the time, and the various characteristics of the nations. She pointed out to the world the beauty, strength and fecundity of the evangelical virtues, and showed how they perfect the natural man and add to his moral splendour, in a sphere immeasurably and inconceivably higher.

Now, these later theorists who praise to the skies the virtues of strength and courage, are in a line with *Pelagius*, though their errors are less insidious, but more crude and more far-reaching. They would, not doubt, be surprised to hear themselves declared the lineal descendants of such an obscure person, whose name can hardly be found outside mouldy theological folios. In their modesty they prefer to trace their origin to more recent times, and complacently point to its roots sinking into the rich soil of the Renaissance.

That was according to them the time when the human soul found itself again; when it threw away the swathing bands of Medievalism, and leaped out of the darkness and dinginess of the

grave into the shining, soft-scented meadows of Greece and Rome, among the smiling Nymphs and the never ageing gods. The mysticism of Fra Angelico was then happily transfigured into the beautiful naturalism of Leonardo, Raphael and Guido. The tormented visions of Dante yielded to the harmony of Ariosto, and the rich, laughing, inebriating, animalism of Rabelais. If one would believe them, it is from the Renaissance that modern, times have derived their breadth of vision, their confidence in themselves, their manly independence, their feeling of continuity with the civilization of Greece and Rome, their love for and worship of an ever-progressing humanity.

That was a glorious revival indeed! Even some of the Pastors of the Church seemed for a time to be carried off their feet by copious draughts of the sparkling new wine. Yet, leaving aside for the present some very sad exceptions of which we shall speak more at length in another place, we can see the triumphs of Christian Sanctity even during that riotous outburst of vitality; and we can affirm, without fear of contradiction, that the principles of holiness enshrined in the Gospel, were as jealously guarded by the Church of the XV and XVI centuries, as they were kept intact in earlier ages.

First, it may be remarked that the most promising development of the Renaissance was due to a beautiful manifestation of Christian charity towards the Greek scholars who, fleeing from before the face of the Saracen at the gates of Constantinople had found refuge in Rome, as also protection and encouragement from the Popes, who gladly forgot ancient wrongs to receive with open arms these brilliant, but miserable exiles. The great love and admiration for antiquity which marks the new era, was in its healthier aspects, but the tardy sprouting and blossoming of a germ that had been kept alive by the Church, and by the Church alone, during the nipping frosts of Barbarian invasions as also during the awful struggles in which Modern Europe grew to adolescence and youth. This admiration for ancient achievements

both in arts and letters, did not mean a yielding up of Christian ideals, or a substitution of Plato and Socrates for Christ. The Graeco-Roman civilization is indeed "the soil in which Christianity grew." Even during the heroic age of the Church the School of Alexandria borrows its illustrations of Christian dogmas from Greek Literature. The Puritan spirit of Tertullian, Novatian and Priscillian, which regarded Athenian and Roman letters as little better than diabolical, never had a considerable following in the Church, wherein the more tolerant views of St. Cyprian and St. Austin gradually prevailed. Neither St. Jerome nor St. Gregory, would have been half as enthusiastic as Leo X in complimenting the Editor of Tacitus on his work. For thus he writes: "Nothing more excellent or useful has been given to men by the Creator, if we except the true knowledge and worship of Himself, than these studies." Though Jerome felt not a few qualms of conscience for the days and nights he had given to the pages of Plautus and Cicero, he was not a little indebted to those authors for that severely classical style of his; and St. Gregory, though he regarded Grammar and Rhetoric as but subordinate arts, was himself no mean Latin scholar.

Walter Pater, speaking of the second century, observes: "What has been on the whole the method of the Church, as a power of sweetness and patience, in dealing with matter like pagan art and pagan literature, was even then manifest." Patience and sweetness, qualities quite appropriate to the tender Church of the second century, now yielded place to frank admiration for the sublime genius of ancient Rome and Greece. She set herself to the task of purifying and ennobling, assimilating and adopting for her own high purposes, whatever was grand and sublime, beautiful and lovely in their productions. Anyone who visits Rome, Florence and Venice, will be lost in admiration at the triumphant victory of the Catholiç Church over pagan ideals in art. The four great achievements of the Renaissance, *viz.*, the Vatican Library, the Borgia Apartments in the Palace of the Popes, the Sixtine Chapel and the Basilica of St. Peter, will, by their

marvellousness, challenge the admiration of the world for all time. The prude and the rigorist may piously shut his eyes in a Roman Basilica, and tremble for his virtue in a Roman Museum; but such as he will never understand the gigantic largeheartedness of God's Church which, by a strange irony of fate is still condemned as illiberal by such as are determined at all costs to vilify her.

As to the Middle Ages was assigned the task of "baptizing" Aristotle, who lent to Catholic Philosophy its terminology and its unassailable logical basis, so it fell to the lot of the Catholic Renaissance to define the path of what may be called Humanism as "the ideal of a perfect training in wisdom and beauty." It was likewise ordained that the Church in those days should attempt to "reconcile a perfectly equipped human life with an ascetic religion," and the demands of freedom for all with submission to Revelation, and obedience to lawful authority. Some, however, may wistfully think af Savonarola, the true representative of the medieval principles of Catholicism, as pitched against the worldly spirit of the Rome of the Renaissance, and conclude that both failed in their impossible venture. To maintain their opinion, however, they will have to conveniently forget that among Savonarola's penitents were men like Pico, Botticelli and Michael Angelo; that the vehement Friar, whilst organizing his "burning of vanities" was buying for St. Mark the Medicean Library; and that Rome did not deliver him up to the Palleschi for his righteous indignation against the cancerous vices that were sapping the life of Italy, but for his obstinate disobedience and his inconclusive and dangerous political entanglements.

On the other hand, a far better type of the happy blending of ancient culture and Catholic Sanctity is presented to us in the person of Sir Thomas More—Scholar, Patriot, Saint and Martyr. He was a man who could hold his own with the wisest in Christendom, who opposed himself as a wall of brass against the

encroachments of his sovereign in matters ecclesiastical, and who gladly laid down his life for God and the rights of His Church. By his enchanting courtesy, by his simple heroism by his mother-wit that sparkled even on the scaffold, he proved himself a true child of the Renaissance.

It has sometimes been cast in the teeth of the Church that the great motto of the Ancients: "*Follow Nature*" was forgotten by her in the Middle Ages; that in those dark days she insistently taught man only to tread the path of sorrow, and give his uncompromising allegiance to the Cross; that it was the Renaissance that revived the glorious old doctrine, and proclaimed to all the world that grand principle which embodies in brief all Philosophy and all Theology combined.

This is a typical example of that grandiloquent style of modern writing which hides poverty or total absence of proof. "*Follow Nature!*" Indeed we should, if Nature means Reason and the Church, even the much maligned Medieval Church, has never rejected the principle. It is good to follow Nature, if we regard Nature, in the pregnant Dantesque expression, as "*God's own Daughter;*" and this truth, far from having been rediscovered by the Renaissance, has always been familiar to all Christians. That was the spirit in which Nature was regarded and followed by Giotto, who gave the deathblow to Byzantinism in Art, and brought man back to Nature, instinct with the Spirit of God. Nature was interpreted in the same manner by the Poverello d'Assisi, who loved it as no man ever did before him, who lavished upon it his overflowing tenderness, who sang of it with all the enthusiasm of a poet, nevertheless dominated it and brought it into subjection. When St. Francis said he had been overhard on his "brother the donkey" (meaning his own body) he revealed to us that his love for Nature was not mere sentimentality, but had all along been mastered by another love, deeper and more sublime.

That is the spirit of Christianity in its dealings with Nature—a spirit that finds fitting expression in the following dictum:

"Love Nature as God's creation, but through Nature learn to love God more."

The Pagan Renaissance tried, but never succeeded, in making the Church forget that the expression "*Follow Nature*" is vague in the extreme. For, as Nature may, and really does, include all the good things of creation, it may also stand for all the dark impulses to anger, lust, avarice, sloth, which are hidden in every one of us. It is the great merit of the Catholic Church to have clearly pointed out, and always insisted on, this distinction. She has never admitted the intrinsic corruption of Nature; but she has taught us that Nature must not be followed blindly; that sin has cast its shadow over Nature; that in many of its tendencies that have all the look of innocence about them, there lurks a real danger, *viz.* that of sin.

The pagan current of the Renaissance wanted to forget these unpalatable truths and wanted to drown them in its muddy waters. If Europe did not yield herself captive to the allurements of Circe, she owes it to the Catholic Church. Many of the great Princes, Scholars, and Churchmen in the XV and XVI centuries, seemed to live for a time in the thoughtless mood of little children, gamboling and splashing in shallow sunlit waters, clear and sparkling on the surface, but miry and full of uncleanness below. Many even among Churchmen, seemed to look upon the sport as quite harmless. But the ever-vigilant Church sounded the alarm, and none too soon. Some heeded the call, but others would not, and went off to disport themselves in other pools, which they foolishly fancied were safe enough. In another chapter we shall deal more at length with these wayward children. Now it is time to close the present chapter.

CONCLUSION

Our rapid survey of the struggles in which the Church was engaged through the ages in her endeavour to guard the precious pearl inherited from Christ, seems to warrant the following conclusions:

The first is *the deep reverence* in which the Church ever held *Antiquity* in all her encounters with error, whether dogmatic or moral. Whenever an attempt was made to twist her doctrine, or give it novel interpretations, she was careful to consult the Gospels, the Apostolic writings and her own living memory wherein, like Mary, the Mother of Jesus, she keeps His every word, lovingly pondering it, and trying to penetrate into its hidden meaning. This memory of hers is enshrined in her monuments, in her Liturgy, in the writings of the Fathers, and in that "*sensus fidelium*" that seems to be a kind of instinct for truth, marvellously directed by the Holy Ghost. It is thus that, like the sturdy oak, she has struck deep root into the soil and can successfully withstand the violence of the winds and storms that sweep the hill-side.

The second regards *the supernatural world,* of which the Church is the custodian. Novel doctrines may powerfully appeal to the sense of pruriency among a certain class of people. They may be presented with such a show of learning and erudition as to make them appear very deep and profound, and preferable, in the eyes of the vulgar and the inexperienced, to the simplicity of the Gospel. But the teaching of the Church is based on the word of God which endures from eternity to eternity. Her one object is to safeguard God's Truth and His interests, knowing *that* to be the best way to safeguard the interests of man.

The third is *the balance and harmony of the Church's doctrine and discipline.* She is stern but not inhuman, she is merciful, but not lax; she tells us to chastise the body, and bring it into subjection, but not so to weaken it as to render it unfit for the daily duties of life; she exacts respect for her priests, but expects from them a high standard of knowledge and virtue, she deals with the supernatural, but she has to build on the natural, which she corrects, perfects and elevates. Error on the contrary always implies a negation, or an exaggeration, or the emphasizing of one point to the detriment of others. It is like a malady

which promotes the unhealthy growth of one limb, whilst another is starved. The Church of Christ is like a magnificent orchestra, in which various instruments wonderfully blend together, without any jarring notes or painful discord. All is grand and inspiring, beautiful and elevating. The Church possesses the saving grace of commonsense, and none of its narrowness. She exhibits all the inspiration of poetry and none of its extravagance. She soars like an eagle within the splendours of God, and yet she mercifully understands that we are creatures of sense powerfully drawn towards evil and weak in the matter of resistance. She remembers that we are dust; she does not wonder at our sins, but mother-like she stoops to lift us from our falls.

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CHAPTER V

PRIMITIAE CHRISTI

or

THE FIRST FRUITS OF CHRISTIAN SANCTITY

So far, I have endeavoured to show how the Church has been the faithful custodian of the sanctity of Christ, of that germ of immortality He Himself has sown in the human race. Her role, however, was not merely to guard the deposit; but also to make it germinate, sprout out and bring forth abundant fruit in the hearts of men. I shall quote here a striking passage from the letter to Diognetus, a document of the third century, which describes how Christianity was leavening the whole of mankind. "The Christians," he says, "are not distinguished from the rest of mankind by country or by speech or by customs. For they do not dwell in cities of their own, or use a different language, or live a peculiar sort of life. This knowledge of theirs (*i. e.*, their Religion) has not been discovered by the thought and effect of inquisitive men; they are not champions of a human doctrine, as some men are. But though they dwell in Greek or barbarian cities according as each man's lot is cast, and follow the customs of the land in clothing and food, and other matters of daily life, yet the condition of citizenship which they exhibit is wonderful and admittedly beyond all expectation. They live in countries of their own, but simply as sojourners; they share the life of citizens, and they endure the lot of foreigners; every foreign land is to them a fatherland and every fatherland a foreign land. They marry like the rest of the world, they beget children, but they do not cast their offspring adrift. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They exist in the flesh, but they live not after the flesh. They live their life upon this earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws,

but in their own lives they surpass those laws. They love all men and are persecuted by all; they are unknown and yet they are condemned; they are put to death, and yet they give proof of new life. They are poor and yet make many rich; they lack everything, and yet in everything they abound. They are dishonoured, and their dishonour becomes their glory; they are reviled, and yet they are vindicated. They are abused and they bless; they are insulted and they repay insult with honour. They do good and are punished as evil-doers; and in their punishment they rejoice as finding new life therein. The Jews war against them as aliens; the Greeks persecute them; and yet those that hate them can state no grounds for their hatred. In a word what the soul is to the body, that the Christians are to the world. The soul is spread through all the members of the body; so are Christians through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, and yet is not of the body; so Christians dwell in the world, and yet are not of the world. The soul, itself invisible, is detained in a body which is visible; so Christians are recognized as being in the world, but their religious life remains invisible. The flesh, though suffering no wrong, hates the soul and fights against it, because it is prevented by the latter from indulging in its pleasures; so too the world, though suffering no wrong, hates Christians, because they set themselves against its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh that hates it, and the members thereof, so Christians love those that hate them. The soul is enclosed within the body, and itself holds the body together; so too, Christians are held fast in the world as in a prison, and yet it is they who hold the world together. Itself immortal, the soul abides in a mortal tenement; Christians dwell for a time in the midst of this corruptible world, awaiting a happy immortality in heaven. The soul, when it is stinted in food and drink, thrives the better; so Christians, when they are punished, increase daily all the more—so exalted is the position which God has called them to fulfil and which it is not lawful for them to refuse."

This passage shows how Christianity had spread far and wide even as early as the third century, how its spirit was vivifying and thrilling vast tracts of the Roman Empire, which turned round upon the enemy with all its might and ferocity. The conquests of the new Religion were chiefly among that considerable portion of Society, known as *the Slaves*, whom nobody ever thought of befriending and helping to rise in the social scale. Torn from their homes, and transplanted into the purulent Roman gardens, they lived in the most appalling immorality. We have seen how St. Paul sought to reclaim them to virtue and taught them to be resigned to their lot, at the same time that he exhorted their Christian masters to treat them as brothers. Thus wrote Origen, (*Contra Celsum*): "They are learning to live as freeborn men, sharing in the same Sacraments as their masters, having access to the same places of worship, marrying legitimately before God." Aristides, a writer of the second century, informs us that " the faithful, if they happen to have slaves, male and female, or young servants, endeavour to make Christians of them out of the love they bear them; and those that become Christians, they call brothers, without distinction of persons." (Apol. 15). Some of these converts were elevated to positions of highest power and responsibility in the Church, as Pope Pius, and Pope Callistus. These exercised the most potent influence for good on the spirit of the times. St. John Chrysostom graphically describes them as "resplendent gems which scintillate even in the mud."

Listen to a slave girl, answering her judge, who tries to rob her of her faith in Christ.

'What is thy name?' queries the Magistrate.

'What matters my name? I am a Christian.'

'Is this man here thy master?'

'Yes; but he is the master of my body only. The master of my soul is God."

'But why doest thou not worship thy master's gods?'

'Because I am a Christian, and I don't worship false gods or dead idols. I adore the one, living, true and eternal God.' (*Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri*, *Note Agiografiche*).

This dauntless spirit manifests the transforming power of Christianity—a power not yet exhausted in the Church, for even now we witness similar bravery among the converts of the depressed classes in this land.

"The Gospel is preached to the poor." This is one of the most consoling characteristics of Christ's glad tidings. Together with the slaves we find that the "*tenuiores et humiliores*" "the humble folk of Rome" formed a considerable portion of the first converts. They came indeed from the degraded "*plebs Romana,*" who despised work, and lived on the humiliating bread doled out by the State, perpetually clamouring for the bloody spectacles of the Circus; but their Faith in Christ and loyalty to Him was so robust, that when the terrible persecution of Nero broke out, bringing them face to face with death, they showed their metal and bravely stood the trial. In the XV book of the Annals, Tacitus describes their sufferings. Covered with the skins of wild beasts, they were hunted to death by bloodhounds, or cruelly impaled in the imperial gardens. Their bodies were smeared with oil and pitch, and set fire to. The lurid light shed by these human torches threw into gruesome relief the orgies of the maddened populace. St. Clement of Rome, writing to the Corinthians towards the close of the first century, speaks of some poor women, who, "after having endured terrible and monstrous indignities, obtained the crown in the glorious combat, and received the recompense, notwithstanding the extreme weakness of their bodies."

But Christianity had its converts among *the upper classes* as well. Thus Tacitus narrates how Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Aulus Plautius, who had subjugated the Bretons under Claudius, had to appear before a family tribunal to answer the accusation of professing a "foreign superstition." Since a

Catacomb inscription tells us she had a Christian child, in all probability the "foreign superstition" meant Christianity. She was one of the noblest conquests of the Apostles among the Roman Aristocracy. On the Ardeatine Way may still be seen the Catacombs of Domitilla, the niece of the Emperor Vespasian. Her husband, Flavius Clemens, was beheaded because he professed to be a follower of Christ, and she was banished to an island. Under Domitian, Acilius Glabrius, Consul for the year 99, was murdered because he supported the new religious movement. These instances are proof positive that Christianity was not merely the religion of the poor and the depressed, but also of the noble and the wealthy. The names of the Cæcilii, Cornelii, Aemilii, Annii, Pomponii, Aurelii, all belonging to the noblest Roman families, are frequently met with in the Catacombs. Paul Allard in his *Lectures on Martyrdom* says that from the second century onwards, the number of nobles joining the Christian Religion cannot be counted. He also quotes Origen, who in his day refuted the calumny that many became Christians just to enable them to approach more easily "the wealthy and those that occupied high positions as also noble and refined ladies." (*Contra Celsum*, III, 3).

At the period of which we are writing, it was the fashion among the aristocracy to embrace a Religion coming from the East, and Juvenal grows indignant at the descendants of "the ancient matrons of Rome, types of modesty and matronly decorum" who eagerly embrace the superstitions from the banks of the Nile and the Orontes, as an easy means of indulging their every passion. He describes the troops of fortune-tellers from Armenia or from Commagene; of Chaldaean Astrologers and Syrian seers, all of whom pounced upon the Roman people and especially their women-folk making them easy victims of the superstition of the latter and the greed of the former. Under the lead of some knavish priest, the wife would roam the streets by night in open contempt of common decency and the strict orders of her husband.

But it was not mere curiosity, or a desire to gratify their wantonness that brought converts to Christianity. We are already familiar with their virtues, their simplicity, their spirit of unworldliness. The Christian women especially were noted for their fidelity, and for the care with which they reared their children. If, yielding to the weakness of their sex, they sometimes gave themselves up to vanity, they were gently reprimanded by the elders. St. Paul insists that the aged women's behaviour should be holy, that they should not be "false accusers," or "given to much wine." But they "should teach the young women to be wise, to love their children, to love their husbands, to be discreet, chaste, sober, having a care of the house, gentle, obedient to their husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed." (Titus, II). Instead of attending the Christian mysteries in a spirit of vanity and frivolity, they are warned that when they go to the sacred assembly; their apparel should be decent; that they adorn themselves with modesty and sobriety, not with plaited hair, or gold, or pearls or costly attire, but as it becometh women professing godliness with good works. (I. Tim. II). Another injunction which the Apostle laid upon them, is as opportune now as it was then: "The woman shall be saved through childbearing; if she continue in faith, and love and sanctification, with sobriety." (I Tim. II).

Nevertheless, he is careful to point out that virginity is not less, but even more pleasing to the Lord. For "the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, as she may be holy both in body and in spirit." (I Cor. VII). The Romans of the period preceding the Empire held virginity in great esteem. Their daughters never appeared in public without a veil, and never sat at table with guests of the other sex, lest they should be forced to listen to conversation that might bring the blush of shame to their cheeks. Those early Christians, remembered the example of Mary, the Virgin Mother of Christ, held virginity in great honour, and rigorously checked any tendency to laxity in dress or demeanour.

Tertullian, in a book which he dedicated to his wife, exhorts her, in case he should die first, not to marry again, but rather "to imitate the examples of our sisters who, despising the advantages of youth and beauty, esteem virginity above matrimony and prefer to be beautiful and pure before God, than before mortal man. With Him they live and hold converse night and day, and are thus numbered among the angels."

Not that the peace of Christian assemblies was never marred by dissensions and brawlings, the usual concomitants of drunkenness; nor that their sanctity was never violated by an unworthy reception of the Sacraments. For there is nothing so holy but may be defiled, nothing so high and sublime but may be degraded and dishonoured either by the fraility or the malice of man. The Apostle St. Paul was careful to check such rising disorders by insisting on the sanctity of the Christian Mysteries' and by threatening the unworthy with the divine wrath. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." (I Cor. II).

These admonitions are, no doubt, rather severe in tone, and bear a strong resemblance to many a subsequent letter of Pope and Bishop, directed towards the reform of abuses that constantly crop up among the masses. That the Christians profited by them is clear from their heroic behaviour in their hour of trial. They did not then hesitate to sacrifice their wealth, their friends, their very life for Christ Jesus. In fact their desire to suffer for our Lord was of so overpowering a nature that not infrequently they presented themselves of their own accord before the Magistrates as Christians. In this manner did the great Roman Martyr, St. Agnes, behave when still in her teens. Similarly the Virgin Eulalia, secretly left her home to win from the judges the crown of Martyrdom. And yet they knew that martyrdom was often proceeded by trials of a terrible nature. Tertullian alludes to them in the following words: "The world itself," he writes,

"renders testimony to the worth of one of the virtues which we hold in the highest esteem, when rather than inflict torments upon our women, it tries to rob them of that which they prefer to their very life." (*De Pudicitia* 1, 2). And St. Cyprian, forty years later, writing to console the Christians that had been decimated in the plague of the year 262, says: When sickness overpowers them, "then the Christian Virgins go in peace, in all their glory, for they have ceased fearing the threats of antichrist the corruption, and the infamous places." (*De Mortalitate*, 15). "Whatever God wills," answered the slave Sabina to the Neochoros, who was threatening her with dishonour. For she knew that men can violate the body but not the soul. And Theodora answered the Prefect of Egypt: "I think that you cannot be ignorant that God sees our hearts. He esteems in us only one thing, the determined will to be chaste. So, if by your order I am subjected to violence, I shall in no way be the worse for it before God. I am ready to give up this body, over which power has been granted to you; but remember that God alone has power over my soul." (*Passio SS. Didymi et Theodorae*). But the strength of the love which the early Christians bore to our Lord appears to greatest advantage in this, that they succeeded not only in overcoming the torments which the most refined cruelty could devise, but also in remaining steadfast inspite of fears and entreaties, of caresses and blandishments, of those nearest and dearest to them. Such is the tremendous hold which the manifestation of tender love has over the heart of man that it draws from St. Augustine the following sad complaint: "How many, when about to confess Jesus Christ, have been shaken in their constancy by the embrace of their dear ones!" And yet Christ had said: "He that loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me!" The martyrs remembered His words.

St. Perpetua had just been imprisoned when she received a visit from her old father. "He was trying," she tells us, "to shake my constancy, moved by the love he felt for me."

"Father," I said to him, "do you see that pitcher on the ground?" "I do," returned he. "Can you call it by any other name than its own?" "No, I cannot," he said. "Neither can I be called by any other name but Christian." At these words, my father grew furious, and threw himself on me as if he would pluck out my eyes. But he inflicted on me only a slight injury, and giving me a severe reprimand, he withdrew."

Speaking of her prison-life in Carthage, Perpetua continues: "I was then suckling my little child, which was more dead than alive through hunger. I expressed to my mother the great anxiety I felt on his account. I was also trying to console my brother, and was recommending the little one to the care of all around. For several days I suffered acutely on account of my separation from my child, till finally I was permitted to have him with me. From that moment, I observed a general improvement in my condition and the prison became for me a garden of delights. Thus passed a few days "till the rumour was spread that we had to appear before the court. My father hastened to my side, still hoping to conquer, what he called, my obstinacy. "My daughter," he cried, "have pity on my white hairs; have pity on your father, if I still deserve to be called so by you. Remember that I brought you up with my own hands. If to-day, you have reached the flower of womanhood, you owe it solely to me. I have loved you more than all your brothers. Oh! do not make me an object of shame and scorn before the whole world! Think of your mother, of your brothers, of your aunt. Think of your own child, who cannot live without you. Put aside your pride and obstinacy, which spells ruin for us all. If you are tortured or put to death, know how we are disgraced for ever, and shall never more dare to appear in public. Thus did my father speak in the excess of his love for me. Then he would throw himself at my feet, and shedding an abundance of tears, he would call me not daughter, but lady. I felt great compassion for my old father, as also for all my family, who were overwhelmed with sorrow on my account. I tried to

console him, saying: 'In the dock God's will shall be done in me for we belong to him and not to ourselves." He would then retire, leaving her very sad; for whilst all her dear ones were Christians, the old man was still a pagan, and was plunged in the extremity of grief on account of the fate impending on his beloved daughter. Finally, came the day of trial "When it was my turn to appear in court, father appeared on the scene, carrying my child in his arms, and, calling me to himself, he said weeping 'Have mercy on your little child.' Then the Procurator Hilarianus said to me: 'Have mercy on your old father. Have pity on your infant child, and offer sacrifice to the Emperor.' I answered: 'I will not sacrifice.' The Procurator asked me: 'Are you a Christian?' I replied: 'Yes, I am.' Since my father did not stir from his place, Hilarianus ordered him to be beaten with a rod and expelled from court. I felt the blow more than if I myself had been struck—such was the compassion I felt for my poor old father. Then we were all condemned to the beasts. Full of joy, we returned to our prison. Since my little boy was accustomed to stay in prison with me, I sent immediately the Deacon Pomponius to take him from my father. But he refused to give him up. It pleased God, however, that the child should not ask for my breast, and that I should not suffer by the retention of milk. The day of the spectacle at last drew near. Father came to see me. He looked worn out and emaciated by his long mental agony. He began to tear out his beard, then threw himself on his face on the ground cursing his old age, and uttering words that would have moved a heart of stone to tears. I felt my heart torn asunder, thinking of his unfortunate old age." One of the last words of Perpetua, continues Paul Allard, from whom this sad episode has been taken, was for her dear ones. She is there standing in the arena, awaiting death. And behold her own brother, comes up to her together with another Christian: 'Remain steadfast in the faith,' says Perpetua to him; 'love one another, and do not be moved by my sufferings.' These words were her last farewell to the world and to her own family.

She had been baptized during her imprisonment, and was therefore a convert of a few days only. And yet what superhuman courage and constancy in overcoming torments and death and even the dearest instincts of nature!

So far I have indicated the conquests of Christian Sanctity among various classes of society, among the poor and the lowly, among the rich and the great—of both sexes and of all ages. I have not suppressed the little frailties to which a few of the early Christians were subject; defects which do not detract from the nobility of their ideals, the general unworldliness of their lives, the strength of their convictions, and the heroism of their love, which was tested by the supreme test of blood.

Of one class, however, I have not spoken, that of the learned and the so-called *philosophers*. Perhaps Christianity had no hold on them. Is not the ideal of Christ based on humility? How, then, could these proud people subject themselves to Him? Does He not insist that unless we become as little children, we cannot enter into His Kingdom? But how can a follower of Plato, of Epicurus, or of Zeno, make himself a little child? Lucian, the Satirist, who poured the shafts of his ridicule on their exalted Majesties of Mount Olympus did not let the Philosophers go scot free. There was ample justification for his denunciations of sham philosophers, and philosophies, their endless wrangling, their scepticism, and above all, their boundless pride and vanity. Certainly, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius were too great to come under his lash. He was, however, quite right when he held up to derision "the charlatans and impostors who sheltered themselves under the names of the great masters of olden times, and who pushed their tenets to absurdity." And yet even these Philosophers gave up their worldly wisdom, and laid down their pride at the feet of Christ, and listened with childlike docility to His teachings. Not only did they humbly submit to Him when He taught them to give up their luxurious life, distribute their

worldly possessions to the poor, and live in complete detachment from all created things. The same advice was given also by Diogenes and Crates, who had followed it themselves. But the Philosophers submitted to Christ even when he led them up the steep and thorny path of Calvary, and taught them the lessons of utter self-effacement and self-renunciation, as also the crucifixion of the flesh with its vices and concupiscences.

St. Paul was the first to address himself to the Philosophers. At first they held aloof and regarded him with rather a sceptical eye. They treated him as but "a sower of words." Attracted, however, by the intense earnestness of the man, they gave him a hearing when he spoke to them of the unknown God, in whom we live and have our being, and told them how we should seek him "for we are also his offspring." He wound up with the unwelcome exhortation "that all should everywhere do penance. Because he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in equity, by the man whom he hath appointed; giving faith to all, by raising him up from the dead." (Acts XVII). "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some indeed mocked, but others said: We will hear thee again concerning this matter. So Paul went out from among them. But certain men adhering to him, did believe; among whom was also Dionysius, the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." (*Ibid*). The relations of the Apostle with Seneca, and the latter's conversion cannot be established with certainty. His first converts, were no doubt poor humble folk, as is clear from the following quotation: "See your vocation, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble: but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong. And the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory in his sight." (I Cor. I, 26-29). For the

foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (*Ibid*).

But towards the end of the second century, as Clement of Alexandria tells us, not a few among the Philosophers were converted to Christianity. (*Strom* VI, 16). Naturally, these took up the pen in defence of the new religion. Thus we have the apologetic writings of St. Justin, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, St. Cyprian, and others. Towards the end of the third century Arnobius could write: "Orators of great talent, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, doctors, philosophers, sought to know the doctrines of the Church and abandoned with contempt those in which they had formerly put all their trust." (*Adv. Gent.* II, 55).

Before I conclude this chapter I will say a word about the infiltration of Christianity through the ranks of *the military*. At first sight there seems to yawn an abyss between the doctrines of Christ and life on the battle-field. Yet the Church could not forget the kindness of the Precursor to the poor soldiers, nor the readiness with which Christ heard the prayer of the Centurion, nor yet the great symbolic fact of Peter baptizing the Centurion of Caesaraea. So she tried to bring Christ's message to the soldiers. It is to be remarked, however, that the qualities expected of a soldier *viz.*, courage, self-abnegation and contempt of death, were just those which were demanded of the early Christians. No wonder therefore that Christianity soon made headway among the soldiers. St. Paul preached to the Praetorians that were guarding him in his prison. Tertullian reminded the Pagans that Christians too were fighting with them against the common enemies of Rome. Everywhere—in Italy, on the Danube, in Spain, in Numidia and in Asia, Christian soldiers were also profusely shedding their blood for Christ. In fact, the persecutions ended in 323 with the execution of forty soldiers in Armenia, under Licinius.

This was but the last flickering flame of the series of terrible conflagrations that blazed through the best part of three centuries. Christianity persecuted, ridiculed, hunted above the earth and under the earth, bathed ten times over in its own blood, finally overcame the powers of darkness. The first edict of tolerance was published by that bitter persecutor of the Church, the Emperor Galerian, in the year 311, when, stricken by the hand of God, he was forced to grant a respite to the victims of his cruelty. But it was in the year 313 that the great Constantinian Edict was issued, wherein the Emperor proclaimed liberty of conscience for all, and decreed that all the goods confiscated from the Christians should be returned to their owners. Thus was the cross, whose roots had reached deep down to the Roman Catacombs, now exalted, and shone serenely from the Labarum of the Roman legions. The Lateran Basilica was consecrated to the worship of the Saviour, and the Constantinian Basilica resounded with hymns in praise of Christ.

CHRISTUS VINCIT: CHRISTUS REGNAT: CHRISTUS IMPERAT.
IPSE HERI, HODIE, ET IN SAECULA.

Note

On the Apologetic Value of Martyrdom.

The patient suffering of death, or treatment which would naturally end in death, for sake of the Catholic Faith or in the practice of Christian virtue, is what we usually understand by *martyrdom*. It is the highest exercise of Charity and a supreme act of fortitude; for man has nothing more precious than life, nothing to which he clings with greater tenacity. Martyrdom is therefore a testimony and witness of the truth of the Christian Religion, an unimpeachable document that Christianity belongs to Christ, and an irrefragable seal on its veracity by God Himself.

No one denies that the first three centuries of Christianity were centuries of persecution when the blood of martyrs

flowed like water. The infinite might and the endless resources of the vast Roman Empire were arrayed against the puny and despicable religion of the Galilean Artisan. The reason was because the Romans were under the firm pursuasion that the followers of that newly-founded religion, by refusing to worship the tutelary Roman deities were sapping the very foundations of the Empire. On ten different occasions, therefore, the hostility of that mighty Empire broke out in all its fury against Christians.

True, some ascribe their readiness to die to religious fanaticism, to a kind of perverted loyalty and unreasoning love.

That such a thing may happen in a few isolated cases and under special circumstances we readily grant. But when men and women, young and old, the wealthy and the poor, slaves and nobles, magistrates and soldiers, consuls and generals, men of the world and hermits from the desert – all, in overwhelming numbers, defy the powers of darkness, and lay down their lives in the midst of atrocious torments, protracted beyond human endurance, we pause and ask ourselves whether fanaticism can be so universal and reach such sublime heights. Again, when we consider that men of all nationalities, in Rome and in Asia, in Gaul and in Egypt, in Spain and on the Danube, voluntarily offer themselves to torments and to death in its most horrible aspects, we doubt whether the explanation so lightly suggested, is any explanation at all.

Moreover, they face with equanimity the implements of torture, the fury of the wild beasts, and the crackling flames, under Nero and Domitian, under Decius and Diocletian, under Licinius and Maxentius, — steadfast, though one word can save them, a bending of the knee or a burning of a little incense. Often their relations coaxed them to relent, and the magistrates felt pity on their youth or beauty, and promised them royal favour and protection. But they stood calm and collected, firm and unyielding, not in sullen and obstinate silence, not in cold

cynicism, not in proud contempt, nor in dramatic pose, but quiet and serene, full of faith and confidence in their Saviour Jesus Christ. They knew He had foretold that His followers would suffer persecution and hatred; but they knew also that He had promised to be with them, to teach them how to answer their judges, to support them under their torments. Their courage was not the courage of the soldier who has been trained to valour; barring a few rare exceptions, they did not court death, they rather shunned it, in obedience to the directions of their leaders; but when it did come, they accepted it as the greatest of privileges amid the execrations of the crowd who cursed their blindness; sometimes turning the heart of the persecutor to Christ, and even to brave death for His sake.

"Whether it is fire or the cross, the assault of wild beasts, the wrenching of my bones, the crunching of my limbs, the crushing of my whole body, let the dire tortures of the devil all assail me if I do but gain Christ Jesus"—thus wrote the venerable Ignatius of Antioch on his way to martyrdom. When the Proconsul bade the aged Polycarp, the friend of St. John, "swear by Caesar, and have done with Christ," he answered: "Eighty and six years have I been His servant, and He has never wronged me, but has ever preserved me safe. How can I now blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" When they would have fastened him to the stake, he said: "Let alone; He who gives me strength to suffer the torment of fire, will also give me courage to stand firm upon the pyre without your nails."

How could this be without a special inspiration and help from God Almighty, who thereby testified to the Divinity of Christ, whom the Martyrs invoked, and for whose love they suffered; and who thus confirmed the truth of that Catholic Church, whose prayers helped the Martyrs in their struggles, whose Sacraments comforted them during their imprisonment, and whose pious hands finally gathered their remains, and piously laid them under her altars?

The first Martyrs had known Jesus of Nazareth personally. They had gazed on His countenance; they had listened to His voice addressing the crowds, or speaking in sweet intimacy to the Twelve. They were happy to die for Him to whom they owed everything. The next generation died for the very same doctrine which they had received incorrupt, and with the same love burning in their hearts. Thus it went on for eight or ten generations, till it broke the obstinacy of the strongest Government that the world has ever seen.

But the stream of the Martyrs' blood did not run dry with the publication of the Edict of Constantine. Others fell for the same cause and with the same heroism, under the Barbarians, who were devastating and perhaps renovating Europe. Others again shed their blood amongst the fierce followers of the Prophet.... and down, down through the centuries, till the wars of the Reformation, and the orgies of the French Revolution. And even in our own times Christ has had His Martyrs in Tonkin, in Uganda, in China; and has them still in Russia and in Mexico.

They all witness to the same faith; they are all filled with the same impassioned love; they all fulfil the strange prophecy of Him, who did not promise peace and plenty to His followers, but persecutions in this life, and the beatitude of God for Eternity.

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CHAPTER VI

THE VICTORY OF CHRISTIAN SANCTITY OVER THE PAGANISM OF ROME AND THAT OF OUR OWN TIMES.

(A)

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF PAGANISM

Apart from Revelation, there are three factors which help mankind to live in a manner not quite at variance with its noble destinies. The first is *human nature* itself, which, though corrupted and fallen from its primitive purity, still retains a ray of the divine Light, and even in times of deepest national degradation, when the greater number seem to be engulfed in the flood of vice, urges us to strive after higher things. The second is *human tradition* and custom as it manifests itself in the lives, habits, ways of thinking and speaking of the saner part of a community. This is essentially conservative, and sees danger in novelties, whether for better or for worse. The third is *human religion*, which, through beliefs and ceremonies, binds men to that Supreme Power, whose existence is almost instinctively admitted by all. It dimly proclaims the incorruptible justice of Him, who not only makes His voice felt in the depths of our conscience, but promises retribution even beyond the grave. Hence it serves as a deterrent from at least the most shocking moral aberrations.

At the dawn of Christianity, the influence which these three great realities had exercised on ancient Roman Society, and which accounts for the stern virtues of the early Republic, was not wholly spent. We can still observe some traces of it in the noble lives of many of the Stoics, of not a few of the Aristocracy, and of even some of the Emperors.

The names of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius come naturally to the mind, and it would not be difficult to mention others. These men strove to do their duty as they saw it; they shunned corruption at least in their public life; they were devoted fathers, and not infrequently faithful husbands. Many of them preferred the quiet simplicity of the country to the turmoil of Rome. On the battle-field they were brave and enduring; while in the Forum they endeavoured to administer justice impartially.

I insist on mentioning this for two reasons. The first is because God never entirely abandons His creatures, but always remains a Father to poor mankind; and though the majority live as if they had entirely forgotten Him, there are always some who, in a measure at least, obey His voice.

The second reason is that, having later on to speak of the corruptions of Rome, I wish to avoid drawing a one-sided picture of the state of Society at the beginning of Christianity.

God was not entirely without His witnesses even in the Roman Empire, and though they were few and far between, though their voice was weak and often uncertain, yet they testified to the undying influence for good, of human nature, of human customs and traditions and of natural religion.

I had intended speaking more at length of some of the noble men and women of Rome, but the tyranny of space does not permit me to do so. Still, I shall choose one example, which may be regarded as fairly typical of the rest and which will bring out very clearly the possibility of natural goodness existing even outside of Christianity. It will further indicate that what was best in Paganism, shines with but a feeble light, when compared with what is best in Christianity. It is a pleasing picture of an honest life, which does not transcend the possibilities of human nature, but is far below the transfigured heroism of the Christian Saint.

The man, whose life I shall briefly describe was Gnaeus Julius Agricola, whose father Julius Graecinus (a distinguished

Orator and Philosopher) was an unhappy victim of the envy of Julius Caesar. His mother, Julia Procilla, carefully watched over the boy, and taught him in early youth the virtues which he practised in mature years. Though he was inclined to speculation and Philosophy, she looked forward to his serving his country in the Senate and on the battle-field. This philosophical tendency, as Tacitus informs us, was soon corrected by reason and experience, but he retained from his learning that most difficult of lessons—"Moderation." Procilla was murdered by the lawless followers of Otho, and a large portion of her patrimony was plundered.

Agricola served his military apprenticeship in Britain. Tacitus, his biographer, tells us that the young officer, did not give himself up to wrecklessness with which such young men often make the profession of arms a mere pastime, nor to indolence either. He never misused his Tribune's rank to procure enjoyment or to escape from duty.

From Britain, Agricola went back to Rome where he was appointed Questor for the Province of Asia. The young Roman officials seldom returned from Asia the better, except in pocket, for the morals of Roman Asia were even worse than the morals of the Capital. Agricola, however, did nothing to be ashamed of in his Questorship.

When he returned to Rome, he married the noble Domitia Decidiana. Their union was a very happy one. They had two children—a son, who died in his infancy, and a daughter who was married to Tacitus, the Historian.

In the year 77 A. D., Britain, the scene of his past services, was assigned to him as his province. The Britons anxiously watched the temper of their new Governor. Other Proconsuls, if we may accept the statement of a panegyrist, had idled away their time "in vain display," and a round of ceremonies," whereas Agricola "chose rathe toil and dangerr." We shall

not follow him through the hilly forests and the plains of Great Britain. Suffice it to say that many states hitherto independent gave hostages, and laid aside their animosities, and Agricola gave private encouragement and public aid to the building of temples, courts of justice, and dwelling houses, praising the energetic and reproving the indolent. He likewise provided a liberal education for the sons of the chiefs, and showed such a preference for the natural powers of the Britons over the industry of the Gauls, that those who lately disdained the Roman tongue were now anxious to be possessed of its eloquence. Hence too, a liking sprang up for the Roman style of dress, and the "toga" became fashionable. This however led them insensibly to things which dispose to vice—the lounge, the bath, the elegant banquet. All this in their ignorance they called civilization, when it was in fact but a part of their servitude." He was careful alike of the good conduct of his army and the convenience of the Britons. He kept his own household under strict control. Promotion he determined by merit alone; impartial himself, he did not listen to the prayers or recommendation of his friends. He "lightened the exaction of corn and tribute by an equal distribution of the burden, while he got rid of those contrivances for gain which were more intolerable than the tribute itself."

Agricola was recalled in A. D. 84, but he avoided all display. He entered Rome after nightfall, and studiously shunned publicity. Simple in dress, courteous in conversation, accompanied by two or three friends only, he excited the surprise of a people accustomed, and not unfavourable to ostentation. He was cordially hated by Domitian. He died, at the early age of 56, his death being attributed to poison. The concluding sections of the "Life of Agricola" have in all times been regarded among the noblest examples of historical eloquence. After recounting Agricola's demeanour in his last hours, the tender care of his most loving and faithful Decidiana, and his own and his wife's grief at their absence from his dying bed, the

biographer proceeds: "If there is any dwelling place for the spirits of the just; if, as the wise believe, noble souls do not perish with the body, rest thou in peace; and call us thy family from weak regrets and womanish laments to the contemplation of thy virtues, for which we must not weep nor beat the breast. Let us honour thee not so much with transitory praises as with our reverence; and, if our powers permit us, with our emulation. That will be the true respect, that the true affection of thy nearest kin. This, too, is what I would enjoin on the daughter and wife—to honour the memory of such a father, such a husband, by pondering in their hearts all his words and acts, by cherishing the features and lineaments of his character rather than those of his person. It is not that I would forbid statues wrought in marble or in bronze; but as the faces of men, so all the likenesses of the face, are weak and perishable things, while the features of the soul are everlasting, such as may be expressed, not in some foreign substance, or by the help of art, but only in our own lives. Whatever we loved, whatever we admired in Agricola, survives, and will survive, in the hearts of men, in the succession of the ages, in the fame that awaits noble deeds. Over many of those that have gone before, as over the inglorious and ignoble, the waves of oblivion will roll; Agricola made known to posterity by history and tradition, will live forever." (Cfr. *Tacitus* by W. Bodham Donne; Passim).

The picture though possibly exaggerated, and not without its defects, is noble and inspiring, the more so as characters like that of Julius Agricola were becoming rarer and rarer in the Empire.

The light of human reason, though clear and strong in the solution of political problems, or in the pursuit of liberal arts, was apparently becoming dimmer in moral and religious questions, leaving the great majority groping and confused as to their bearings.

Ancient customs and traditions were losing their grip on the multitude, and natural religion was almost buried under a

rank growth of superstition, and a disorderly mass of fables and degrading practices. The few who still managed to keep afloat in the general wreckage, did so, either because they clung passionately to some philosophical system not entirely corrupt, or because they managed to live in entire seclusion, or finally because their "naturally Christian soul" made them turn to that Power, which, however hidden and apparently distant, is ever ready to help and comfort.

But these circumstances, which made the appearance of such men as Julius Agricola, Tacitus, or the Antonines, still possible in Rome, were like some stray planks and floating rafters in a general ship-wreck. They afford but a scanty hope of salvation to those few that are fortunate enough to come across them, whilst the great majority is sinking hopelessly.

And in the Rome of the first three centuries of our era could it be otherwise? The national religion, stern and abstract in ancient times, was now degraded by contact with the East and had lost all hold on the people. Lucretius could safely propound his arguments against immortality and show that, as all had a beginning, all will have an end. Lucian, in the "*Dialogues of the gods*" not only seized upon the absurd points in religious fable as presenting excellent material for burlesque, but he indulged at the same time in the most caustic form of satire upon the popular belief, against which long before his day, the intellect of even the heathen world had revolted. This will appear but natural when we remember that Olympus was but an assembly of rogues, who indulged in the most opprobrious vices to which mankind is subject, and who afforded a good excuse for any excess of envy, cruelty, pride and debauchery. The Priesthood was but a tool in the hands of the Emperors, ministering to all their enormities, without faith, without law; fostering superstitions, dabbling in wizardry and necromancy, going the mechanical round of ceremonies, which had lost all

meaning, having recourse to the meanest devices in order to get at the pockets of their clients.

Pope Leo the Great in his sermon on the Apostles Peter and Paul speaks as follows: "The blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostolic Order, is destined to the Capital of the Roman Empire, so that the light of truth which had been revealed for the salvation of all nations, could more efficaciously spread from the head through the body of the whole world. For men of all nations were then present in Rome; and no people could long ignore what Rome had learnt. Here false philosophical opinions had to be crushed, the vanities of worldly wisdom had to be dissolved, the worship of the devil had to be stamped out. The impiety of every sacrilege had to be destroyed here, where, whatever had been built up with vain falsehood had been most superstitiously gathered. To this city, thou most Blessed Peter, art not afraid to come, and whilst the companion of thy glory, the Apostle Paul, is still occupied in ordering other Churches, thou enterest this jungle of howling beasts, this ocean of most turbulent depth, with greater constancy than at that time when thou didst walk on the waves of the sea."

And indeed, the old customs and traditions were quickly disappearing in the dark sea of Roman corruption. Paganism chiefly that of the Empire, failed to recognise the dignity of the human body, as it fails even now wherever the influence of Christianity is less felt. *Suicide* was regarded as a legitimate means of escaping the burdens and responsibilities of life, and Philosophers, like Cicero and Seneca defended it. The sick were often neglected, and when old, and useless, were sometimes killed. The most opprobrious drunkenness and gluttony was tolerated, and slaves were killed to feed the fish that had to furnish the tables of the nobles.

As to the *condition of women*, though good mothers and wives were loved and respected, woman as woman was despised. She could be sold, beaten, killed. Some even doubted whether

she had a soul like that of man. She was said to be essentially wicked, and born only to be at the mercy of man's sensuality and caprice. Superior education was given only to public women, *heterae* and *hierodulae*, who covered their shame under the veil of religion. Even Philosophers like Plato and Cicero, who in their books professed the highest principles of morality, did hardly see any harm in adultery; and Plato at least, advocated the practice of free love. Not infrequently children, when they were the innocent fruit of crime and shame, or when they were too numerous, were abandoned or killed. Nay, the Roman Law authorized the father to kill the newly-born, if he chose, to expose it, even to immolate it. And if the child was weak or deformed the father was commanded to destroy it. "*Pater insignem ad deformitatem puerum cito necato.*" (*From the law of the X tables—tab. IV*). Abortion was very common, and there were doctors and midwives appointed for the purpose.

Virginity, though greatly esteemed at the time of the Republic, was now practically unknown. One of the Fathers of the Church scoffs at the ten or twelve Vestals that were recruited in Rome with great difficulty, though they would be rich, and honoured, and would have to keep their vows only for a time. Some indeed refrained from the grossest forms of impurity, but only for a while, and in order to be able to enjoy the brutish pleasure more keenly later on, or to supply the perverted passions of others with sharper incentive.

As to Society, the principle that *Rulers* were to serve the people, rather than to be served, had never been accepted, though it had not been utterly unknown. An Emperor, or a small Aristocracy, was the master whom everybody had to slave for. We do not maintain that conditions are perfect now; still the mad wish of Caligula, that the Roman people should have only one head that the Emperor may be able to cut it off at one stroke would be inconceivable in a Christian Prince.

Slavery was and is still one of the darkest spots in the pagan world. The whole earth, till the advent of Christianity,

was covered with slaves, and no Philosopher ever raised his voice against this monstrous fact. One of the most profound thinkers of Antiquity—Aristotle, went so far as to say that slavery was in the nature of some; they were born to be slaves and nothing else.

Sparta's population was under 40,000, her slaves exceeded 200,000. In Athens there were about 20,000 free inhabitants, her slaves numbered 40,000. At Rome a single rich family sometimes possessed as many as 20,000 slaves. A slave could be tortured, mutilated, crucified... Augustus crucified a slave for having killed a tame quail. Domitian ordered a slave to be shut up in a furnace because the imperial bath was too hot. Vedius Pollio threw slaves into the pond to feed the eels. The historian Mommsen says that the sufferings of the whole negro race compared with the sufferings which resulted from Roman slavery were only as a drop in the ocean.

Another shame of Paganism were the *public games*. Thirty thousand gladiators were killed in one year for the pastime of the people, while 5,000 gladiators were sacrificed for the funeral celebration of Vespasian. Trajan held gladiatorial celebrations which lasted four months, at which he exhibited 10,000 gladiators and 11,000 beasts. Caligula seized upon spectators when the gladiators failed. Seneca wrote "mercy is a vice" and Plautus: "To give a poor man food and drink is a folly—a loss to oneself and a prolongation of misery to the man."

(B)

THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY

The first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans shows the abyss into which Pagan Society had fallen before Christianity. But when the new Religion appeared, the world received a tremendous shock. It was like a gigantic wave of vital energy that spread upon the rotten bones of Paganism, and gradually infused a new life into them.

In the preceding chapters I have spoken at length of the Doctrine of Christ, how the Apostles spread it throughout the world, how the Church guarded it in all its purity, and of its marvellous effects on the Christians themselves.

Clearly human nature now found itself pure and unsullied in Christ Jesus; human reason was now illumined by a Divine Light; human customs and human traditions were gradually led to purify themselves of what was wicked and objectionable, and to assume new elements of immortal value; natural religion was purified and elevated to the supernatural order.

Yet it will be conducive to greater clearness, to mention here a few points, wherein the Christian ideal stands forth in opposition to pagan errors and misconceptions. We have seen the ideas current in Roman Society with respect to the body. Now Christianity proclaimed that *the body* was something more than a congeries of clements kept together by some mysterious energy, to be resolved into dust in a short time. It was the temple of the living God, sanctified by actual contact with the Redeemer, bathed in His Blood, implanted with the seed of immortality. Man could not lay it down at will, as if it were a worn-out garment. Suicide thus came to be regarded as a crime against man and God.

The Christian teaching that human nature was raised to share God's very being through the Incarnation, introduced among mankind a new conception of the *relation of the sexes*, and, as it has been well observed by a learned writer—the fixing of this doctrine, with all its consequences, in the minds of men was, of itself, a moral revolution.

"Nowhere, perhaps, is the triumph achieved by Christianity more remarkable than in this domain of sexual morality. That its severe discipline of restraint should have succeeded in bringing into the obedience of Christ the most imperious and indomitable of human appetites is little short of miraculous. But it did more

than this. It exhibited the total denial of the appetite from religious motives as a far more excellent thing than its gratification even within the limits of Holy Matrimony. The life of Christ was a type which His members set before themselves; and following him in His Virginal Purity was recognized as a way to perfection. It was the supreme consecration of the virtue of Chastity; all that was greatest and noblest during these centuries, when the civilization of Europe was distinctively Christian, grew out of this root. One of the profoundest students of human nature the world has ever seen has admirably said: "La virginité, mère de grandes choses—*magna parens rerum*—tient dans ses belles mains blanches la clef des mondes supérieurs. Enfin, cette grandiose et terrible exception mérite tous les honneurs que lui decerne l'Eglise Catholique." (Cfr. Lilly—*India and its Problems*).

Through Christianity another idea slowly made its way among the masses and completely changed their outlook on life. It was the idea of *the universal Fatherhood of God* and of the consequent *Equality and Brotherhood of all men* in Christ Jesus. In Him there is neither Greek nor Barbarian, neither slave nor master, neither man nor woman, but all are free of the freedom of the children of God, all equal in the essential equality of His love and the sublimity of their vocation. Hence gladiators and slaves were bound to disappear. Again the principle was proclaimed that the *Ruler is for the welfare of the people*, and not vice versa, that he, too, is subject to a higher law; that even states and empires must yield to the rights of justice and equity; that their scope, though supreme in its sphere, is yet subordinate to the spiritual destinies of mankind.

Certainly these ideas take time to do their work; yet do it they must. Their action is like the action of myriads of infusoria, which silently work on the bed of the sea, and build up reefs and islands.

Pain, so much dreaded by men, who tried all means to escape from its grip, even to the depriving themselves of life,

was gradually recognized as a means of purification and expiation, as a way of attaining a noble likeness to Christ.

The sacredness of the human person came to be acknowledged, and the practice once common among the Gauls, of selling one another to pay off their debts was soon regarded with abhorrence; and the light of Bethlehem lit up with its sweet brilliance the countenance of the child, which was not only loved as the fruit of love, but was cherished and revered as a sacred trust of God, as the beloved of Jesus Christ. The thirst for amusement was quenched, and men were gradually accustomed to look beyond the swiftly fading roses of our gardens.

(C)

THE VICTORY OF JESUS CHRIST

Considering all this, can we say that the sanctity of Christ has overcome the dark forces of Paganism? If a general answer is to be given, it must be unhesitatingly in the affirmative; for Pagan Rome, with its shameful Olympus has been dead for centuries, and the religion of Christ, with the Cross and the Monstrance, is living and growing under our very eyes. Now, victory is of the living, not of the dead. If we remember the complete revision of values which Christianity has compelled the world to accept, and is compelling it to accept even now, we cannot but say that Christ has conquered. Up to the dawn of Christianity, and also after its advent, wherever men shut their eyes to God's voice, whenever they followed their instincts, and sought happiness in wine, in women, in art, in knowledge, in power, they have been cruelly disappointed. Like a sick man, who tries to regain health in other climes; but always carries his fell disease within himself, and is always unhappy, even when he smiles; those who have sought other masters besides Christ, have only succeeded in inflaming the soreness of their own wounds. Christ has conquered Rome, has displaced Jupiter and Minerva, and has further succeeded in gaining in the heart of man a

place which the false gods can never fill, and which no modern idol can long occupy.

Certainly the world will ever be an enemy to Christ, for it is "all established in wickedness;" and the complete victory will be sung only at Christ's second coming. Yet Christ is victorious even now; for, He has achieved the astounding feat of identifying His cause with God's own cause, so that those who reject Christ have in the end to abandon God Himself. Notice that I speak of the "rejection of Christ," that is to say, of positively refusing Him the allegiance that once was His, thus apostatizing from Him. Consequently the same thing cannot be asserted of those who never accepted Christ's claims, either through want of sufficient knowledge, or for some other reason which excludes full culpability.

Now history teaches us, that wherever Christ has been positively and directly rejected, the rejection of God followed—sooner or later. When a man, once anchored on Christ, breaks off his moorings, he usually loses his spiritual bearings, and is tossed about by the waves of error and unbelief, till he founders in the abyss. And what is said of an individual can be affirmed of a nation as well. The Jews are a tragic example of the fulfilment of the prophecy: "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel." (Luke II). They show the curse of God visibly pursuing a nation, whose leaders have solemnly rejected Jesus Christ. However the Jews have not thereby positively rejected God Almighty to whom they have remained faithful as a nation, and from whom they still expect the Messias. But this is due to a special dispensation of God towards His unhappy people, who in the end will be finally saved. Elsewhere such a dispensation being wanting, the terrible Law follows its course: *Positive and conscious apostasy from Christ means a final apostasy from God.*

Let us turn our eyes to the modern world, and to the nations that persistently wage war on Christ, and insist on excluding Him

from their institutions. They say: No Christ, no Christian influence shall we admit in our schools. And we see their young men, after tasting the ashes of a crude rationalism, end in the darkness of atheism. They are bent on excluding all Christian education from the family—and behold the family loses its stability, marriage is robbed of its mystic sanctity; love breaks the banks which directed its course and, clogged with mud, drowns in despairing sterility the hearts of men and women. Let the sacred principles of Christ be banned from the Councils of State, and from the Parliaments of the Nations—and the Nations, ever suspicious of each other, are condemned to maintain huge armies which dry up their resources during an uneasy peace, and, during war, bleed themselves to death, with cold, scientifically calculated, methods of murder. Away with Christ in all business transactions, in all economic battles. His principles cannot settle them, for they obey iron laws, which are as stern as fate. And Society crumbles to pieces, its strongest ramparts being battered down by the hammer of Communism and Bolshevism. Christ is not wanted in the Art-Studios, and Art loses its inspiration, falls into the clutches of the capitalist who uses it to pander to the worst vices of men.

Christ has indeed overcome the Paganism of Rome; but He also holds in his hands the destinies of modern civilization which, apart from Christ, cannot subsist. Civilization does not mean only the triumph of the mechanical arts, it is not measured by the swiftness with which distances are covered or by a kind of statistical diminution of mortality and contagious diseases. This is but the husk of civilization, which, in its essence, is the triumph of the spirit over matter. But, whenever Christ is rejected, the spirit is overwhelmed. It loses the battle against pain and sorrow which have no inner significance, and men cannot withstand them. Hence the modern humanitarians do away with the old and the sick through a merciful euthanasia, and kill even the unborn, who might diminish their comfort. The spirit goes under in its struggles against lust; for wherever

the light of Christ is extinguished, lust and pride cease to be the allies of the Devil and become the virtues of the "superman."

Now I consider this to be the greatest victory of Christ, that, wherever He is rejected, God, sooner or later, is abandoned, and with God, whatever is pure and spiritual; in short, whatever makes life worth living.

When these thoughts fill our spirits we look with infinite sadness at modern cities, at London, New York, and Paris, and we reflect that, outwardly at least, they do not seem to be better than Rome, Athens and Alexandria. Then the words of Christ over Jerusalem, come back to the mind with all their poignancy. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not." (Matt. XXII, 37).

Are not these words fulfilled in our modern cities? Perhaps not with the same directness as they were fulfilled in Jerusalem; but surely they are a heavier reproach to the modern world than they can ever be when they are applied to Athens and Rome. Rome had sunk low indeed, yet she had not the abundance of light which shines over the cities of to-day. Hence their sin is more grievous. Yet, as the safety of Rome and Athens and Alexandria could not be found in their religious tenets, which were distorted and false, or in their spiritual guides, who lacked all authority and will to help, or in the strength of their social structure, rotten to the bone, but had to come from the shores of Syria, from despicable Judea; so for our modern cities, salvation will come again only from the poor Prophet of Galilee, from the Crucified King of the Jews. For, London, New York and Paris are what they are, not owing to distorted religious tenets in Christianity, but owing to the rejection of the light which Christ has brought to the world, and which keeps still burning in their midst. They are what they are, not because the Christian leaders lack authority and knowledge of things

divine, but because they have chosen other leaders and other guides, who flatter them, and allow them to worship God and Mammon, Wisdom and Venus. Their social system is rotten, and threatens to collapse, not because it is Christian, but precisely because it has practically renounced the principles of Christianity, to be guided by materialism, and a policy of rabid and insatiable competition. Some fatuously turn to science, as the new saviour of mankind, forgetting that science can increase our comforts not our happiness, can help us to conquer nature, not self, can hoax a well-fed pedagogue, but cannot stay the pitiless hammering of Bolshevism. It is not science that will save modern Society but a humble and sincere return to Christ.

Now what the Paganism of Rome utterly lacked and had therefore to receive from outside, the Paganism of modern Europe still keeps in its midst. There was no polar star shining on the dark waters of the ancient world, but there is an inextinguishable star shining on the raging ocean of Europe and America. That star which rose on the Vatican Hill nineteen centuries ago, still shows the haven of truth to spirits tossed about by despairing scepticism, and points the way to salvation to multitudes who doubt whether there be a Father in heaven. When man shall listen again to the voice of Jesus, that speaks unwearily from over the tomb of his first Apostle, when he "shall love what he hates to-day and hate what to-day he loves," he will be a different being, and life will become the opposite of what it is now. And as life to-day is made up of evil and despair, the new life, being its opposite in all things, will be goodness and happiness. Then bliss will be ours; the Kingdom of heaven will begin on earth.

However, unless I am entirely mistaken, I see even now signs of recovery among the nations, that in the past were proud of their Christian inheritance.

Italy, the home of Christ's Vicar on Earth, seems to be reborn to a new era of peace with Christ, and the sincere adoption

of Christ's principles in the family, in the school, and in the public administration of justice.

Spain, ever chivalrous and generous, is breaking the chains of a corrupt bureaucracy, which attempted to allure the people away from Christ, and the whole nation consecrates itself to His Sacred Heart.

France, the leader of every intellectual movement in Europe, appears tired of her wanderings and petulant rebellion against her noble traditions. Materialism, as a philosophical system, is scorned, the intellectual fetishes of fifty years ago are burnt and a return to saner views is discernible.

Human nature, which especially through sound reason, is ever making for good, is slowly swinging back to Christ. Human tradition and custom which in Europe is soaked in Christianity, seems to come again into its own. And the religious instinct, which in the West at least cannot any more be a merely natural instinct, but ever hearkens back to even the faintest whispers from Galilee, seems to be roused to novel activity which betokens new triumphs for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even amongst those nations which officially have torn Christ's seamless robe, and are now touching but the hem of his garment, hope is not dead, and the rainbow of coming serenity is shining against the dark clouds. Certainly the sacred ties of family life seem to get loose amongst them, and the ancient traditions of obedience to authority and modesty, and temperance, seem to relax their grip, yet Christ has not abandoned them. We see this first in their *spirit of charity*. There is no human misfortune which leaves them cold; be it an earthquake in Japan or in Greece, be it a famine in China or in Albania, be it slavery in Africa or in Asia, England and America are always ready with their money, their help, and their genius for organization. Another sign that Christ is still with them is their *longing for unity*—that unity which they have broken, though it was the

priceless gift Christ had left to His followers, though it had to be the sign that would mark out His disciples from all the rest. The third sign that Christ — though mutilated and bleeding—still opens His arms to them, is *their zeal to propagate the Gospel,* and make all nations enter into what they believe to be His Kingdom. It is not merely an official zeal, or the zeal of a few; but it seems to stir all with its strength, for all are ready to loosen their purses to help the Missions, and all regard with respect and admiration the Heralds of Christ.

So the victory of the poor Carpenter of Galilee is great indeed; not so much in what He has accomplished against the Paganism of Rome, as in this that He has finally become the only hope man has against the powers of evil, the only force that will sustain civilization, the only love that will still keep us united with the Father, and make possible the fulfilment of our destinies.

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CHAPTER VII

INDIA—LIKE ROME—CAN BE SAVED ONLY THROUGH THE SANCTITY OF CHRIST

In order to be thoroughly convinced that the moral transformation of the Roman Empire was due to Christianity, which slowly penetrated into the lowest strata of Society, and gradually elevated them to a higher plane of life, let us cast a cursory glance on a country where Christianity is still foreign to the bulk of the people.

We shall see in it almost all the evils that were afflicting Roman Society, with only such variations as are easily accounted or by difference of climate, and a different historical background. Such evils are inherent to a system of Ethics and Religion which excludes Christianity, and are bound to disappear wherever Christian conceptions and ideals have the upper hand.

We shall not take as an example the barbarous tribes of Africa or of Australia, which, owing to their long isolation, to their physical constitution, to the climatic conditions of their sorroundings, and to various other causes, have fallen so low as to raise doubts whether they belong to the same race that has proudly styled itself "*Homo sapiens.*" We shall on the contrary, take a people, or rather a group of peoples, whose ancient civilization has to its credit very notable achievements, who are endowed with qualities, physical and intellectual, of no mean order, who, though they live in what they call the "*Kali Yuga,*" have not yet lost their grand vision of a Divinity, which is Perfect Wisdom, and of a humanity, that can raise itself, by Ascetism and Devotion, to such an intimate communion with the Supreme, as to be able to utter the sublime expression of love "*I am thou.*"

We shall confine our remarks to India, a land, where Idealism has always flourished, which has developed philosophical systems that excite our admiration for their subtlety and depth, which has built up Laws and Customs that still form a subject of interest to Ethnologists, which has produced monuments of Art that, for boldness of conception and wealth of execution, are said to compare favourably with the masterpieces of the West. And yet, what are the actual moral and religious conditions of this land? Surely, as Rome had her Agricolas, so India has her Gokhales, her Tagores and her Gandhis: men of good moral repute, honourable, disinterested, endowed with a clear vision of their country's woes, and desirous of both social and religious reforms. Only that, whilst in Agricola shone an "*anima naturaliter Christiana*," in these men Christian influences have been at work in moulding their character, though there might be a general unwillingness to admit the fact.

THE PEOPLE OF INDIA

a) The Wealthy and the Educated

We may divide the people of India into three classes, though they are quite disproportionate as to numbers.

The first two classes form the aristocracy of wealth, of learning, and of religious idealism. We shall dismiss the wealthy and the learned with a few words; they are of the same type as their brethren in the West at the time of the Fall of the Roman Empire, who are thus described by Gibbon: "They look with indulgence on the errors of the vulgar, diligently practise the ceremonies of their fathers, and devoutly (to all appearances) frequent the temples of their gods;" though, whether there be a God at all they doubt, and whether their formalism interests the Divinity they do not care to know. They argue that their ceremonies and rites are embedded in the traditions and customs of the people. Though these ceremonies are bitterly attacked by foreigners or even by fanatical indigenous reformers, they

maintain that they are harmless in themselves, nay, they are even good and praiseworthy, for their observance tends to inspire and maintain in the bulk of the population respect and admiration for the educated classes.

Apart from the few scattered and disorganized notions which they have picked up in a Missionary Educational Institution, and through their ramblings in English Literature, the wealthy Hindus know little of conscience and duty, as Westerners understand them. Says T. Sitanath Tattwabhusham in his "*Philosophy of Brahmaism.*" (Madras, 1909):

"An old uncle of mine, a gentleman who was noted for his piety, used to repeat now and again, in order to check my youthful ardour for social reform, the inspiring couplet,

Yadi yogi trikalajnah samudra langhana kshamah,
Tathapi laukikacharam manasapi na langhayet."

That is "though one may be a yogi, all knowing and able to leap over the sea, yet he should not, even in thought, go against popular usages." This is the teaching which the Indian receives in his most impressionable years from those to whom his education is entrusted.... He learns nothing of that doctrine of Conscience which one meets with at every turn in Christian Society and Christian literature.... In domestic and social life Indians must always remain slaves of custom.... however refined their own ideas may be.... All freedom of action is systematically starved out and killed by the very economy of Indian homes and Indian society."

As to their religious attitude, they are deeply tainted with Indifferentism, marked, however, by a strong bias towards that Religion in which they have been brought up, and which they cherish, not because it is true, but because it is the Religion of their forefathers. The question whether a Religion is true or false is psychologically a Christian question. A Hindu of the type we are describing, thinks it

irrelevant, as we would think it irrelevant to ask which literature is true, the English or the German; or as a Roman would have thought it irrelevant to ask which of the three religions—Roman, Greek or Egyptian—was true. A Roman must cherish his Lares and Penates, not on account of truth, but because he is a Roman, and it behoves him to be a thorough Roman, true to his traditions and faithful to the institutions of the Empire.

And Hinduism fits the Indian mentality admirably, for, intellectually, it is all-tolerant, all-comprehensive, all-absorbing. As the Brahmin Rajam Aiyar, adopting the words of Monier Williams says: "Hinduism has its spiritual and its material aspect, its esoteric and exoteric, its subjective and objective, its rational and irrational, its pure and its impure. It may be compared to a huge polygon, or irregular multilateral figure. It has one side for the practical, another for the severely moral, another for the devotional and imaginative, another for the sensuous and sensual, and another for the philosophical and speculative. Those who rest in ceremonial observances find it all sufficient; those who deny the efficacy of works and make faith the one requisite, need not wander from its pale; those who are addicted to sensual objects may have their tastes gratified; those who delight in meditating on the nature of God and man, the relation of matter and spirit, the mystery of separate existence, and the origin of evil, may here indulge their love of speculation." (*Rambles in Vedata*, pp. 58, 59). Again: "Hinduism has been growing for centuries nay ages, and is still a compact organism, though huge, with an infinite capacity to expand. In spite of its numerous imperfections, its officious, and too often mischievous, interference with society, and its lazy conservatism, it has,—at least in theory, often also in practice—the unity of the Godhead of Christianity, Mohamedanism, and other monotheistic religions, all the ethical perfection of Buddhism, all the liberty of thought of Agnosticism, all, or all that is practicable, in the charity of Socialism, and all the love and

respect for humanity which Positivism has; nay more, for in its eyes humanity itself is Divinity." In fact, Hinduism, according to many of its votaries, who have lost, or never had any coherent idea of revelation and supernatural religion, and who are thorough-going—though often unconscious—relativists both in Ethics and in Theology, derives its greatest charm from this that it is a faithful mirror of humanity, with all its dreams and its poetry, all its idealism and nobility, and also with its lurid sensuality, its cringing cowardice, its ignoble fears, its cruelty, its avarice, its miserable inconsistency. "The Vedanta is essentially Catholic, writes again Rajam Aiyar, "because it recognizes more than any other Philosophy the grand and universal law of evolution "which none can stay nor stem." Man is its study, man who develops from the brute into God. It takes hold of him from his earliest starting point, and unfolds to him his fullest possibilities. The most primitive and barbarous section of mankind is not too low for its notice, and the highest possible realization of Divinity is the end which it promises to all alike. Its range is therefore the widest possible, and as every man has his religion, however grotesque, primitive and barbarous, all the religions in the world, from the lowest fetishism to the highest Brahmagnana, come within its pale. The religion of fear, the religion of love, and the religion of light, all fall within its scope." And surely Rajam Aiyar could have continued, and said that the religion of vice, and the religion of virtue, the religion of purity and the religion of debauchery, all go to make up this most comprehensive congeries of customs and speculations, of dreams and intuitions that is Hinduism.

As the Romans of the second and third centuries saw in their pagan worship the Palladium of the Roman Empire, which ensured its safety, protected it from the Barbarians, and even from the floods, the famines and the earthquakes, so many a modern Hindu considers Hinduism to be the Palladium of India. That alone will preserve Indian civilization intact, and will ensure for India the continuation of her customs and age-long

traditions. Those who abandon it are traitors to India and Indian national aspirations. They play into the hands of the foreigners, whose only idea is to keep India under their heel, and wring out of her, her wealth, her blood, even her mind and spirit.

b) *The Religious Reformers*

But let us turn to another section, and perhaps more important, of India's spiritual aristocracy, the Religious Idealists. As at the beginning of Christianity, when Paganism was already on its death-bed, there sprang up in the East, and flourished chiefly in Alexandria, a School of Mystic Enthusiasts, who, disgusted with the grossness of pagan superstition, turned to Egypt and India for purer conceptions of the Divinity and for a glimpse into the twilight of Theosophy; so here in India, in the XIX and XX centuries, men of undoubted ability and loftiness of character, pained, and almost terrified at the idolatry and sensuality rampant around them, turned to their ancient Scriptures in the hope of finding there still undimmed the rays of divine light. As the Neo-Platonists distrusted Science and turned to authority in matters of Religion, so the modern Brahmoists hoped to find an unshakable foundation stone for their religious building, not in human reason, but in the Vedas and in the Upanishads. The disciples of Ammonius Sakkas, soon discovered how unreliable is human authority, and therefore appealed to an immediate illumination of the individual by the Deity; and similarly Debendra Nath Tagore first rejected the Vedas and appealed to higher reason, then abandoned higher reason and found refuge in intuition and inspiration.

Plotinus conceived God as the πρώτη δύναμις or primal force, quite changeless, whilst change belonged to its emanations or over-flowing by-products. God, according to him, is invisible, unthinkable, unknown; but He is linked to the world through Mind (νοῦς) which, as a kind of light, penetrates into the darkness of matter. Spirit and mind are the true

being; matter and body, its shade. Individual personality is drowned in the universal, and "the salvation and blessedness of the individual is his sinking in the "All-One." And Pandit Shivanath Shastry too, the chief minister and missionary of the Samaji, identified all force with the Divine Will; and Nagendra Nath Chatturji insisted on the essential unity of the universe and the individual soul, which is but a ray of the Divine Sun, but a facet of the Deity's Infinitude.

The Alexandrians sought final liberation in the destruction of matter through Asceticism and Knowledge, and Jamblicus reached an incredible altitude of spiritual conception. In the same way some modern Indians seek the goal of their "Sanathana Dharma" or sempiternal religion, by forsaking all that is in Nature, by dispelling the veil of ignorance, by renouncing self, concupiscence and all clinging to finite life, and by fixing unswervingly their gaze on the Supreme.

The conceptions of the Alexandrians were sublime; and so are the aspirations of Indian Religious Reformers, which contain much that is good and true, wherever it may come from. Many think that Christianity influenced the School of Alexandria, which was eclectic on principle; and there is no doubt that Christianity has, to a great extent, influenced Modern Indian Theists, as many of them do admit, and facts testify. By this we do not mean to say that whatever was good in Alexandria came from the Church, as we do not mean to assert that whatever is good in Modern Indian Religious Thought comes from Christianity. For, after all, we believe in the capacity of the human mind to grasp the truth, though we do not grant it ability to reach supernatural truth unaided.

And supernatural truth was lacking among the Alexandrians, as in its fullness is lacking in Modern India, though a glimpse of it may not, now and then, be denied to it. Hence, as the ancient Neo Platonists could not draw the people to themselves, so the present-day Theists of India do not reach the masses, even of

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the educated, who evince a degree of spiritual starvation that is really pitiable. Besides, just as the former failed for want of unity, of authority and of touch with reality, so the latter are bound to fail for the same reasons.

There is no divine Voice that keeps them together. For, if in Religion they acknowledge a divine Voice at all, it is nothing else but the voice of their own spirit and discernment, when they do not give up even that to follow the fanciful or dishonest utterances of Mahatma-dreaming women, such as Madame Blavatsky and others of the same stamp. They have no authority one over the other. For, if Rammohun Ray says "Ay," why should not Mozoomdar say "Nay"? Where are their divine credentials that should make me believe the one rather than the other? Finally, their religious movement is unreal because it neglects the emotional and imaginative side of man, which also needs to be consecrated to God, in order that man may honour God in spirit and truth. This unreality is also apparent in the lack of means to bolster up their doctrines and make them practical. A Religion will never live if, besides pointing the way, it does not help to walk in it.

c) *The Millions.*

Let us now direct our attention to that great section of the people of India, to the millions and millions who also inhabit this vast peninsula; who are created by God, who bear His own mysterious Image in themselves, and who, apparently at least, live so far from Him.

We do not see amongst them the same disregard for life, the same attitude towards the body that characterized the Romans of Nero, of Trajan and the Antonini. On the contrary they show an exaggerated respect for *animal life*, which, in some sects, results in awkward and sometimes nauseating practices. Yet—paradoxical as it may appear—*human life* is by no means held sacred in India. It is barely a century since the British

Government succeeded in stamping out "*Sati,*" a murderous practice consecrated by current Religion and made venerable by tradition. Infanticide, chiefly of girls, was fairly common in the Punjab within the memory of living men; and if now it has almost completely disappeared (as far as we can judge from the Police Reports), this again is due to the stern hand of the Law. But be it said to the honour of India, the excesses of drunkenness and gluttony described by Petronius Arbiter in detail, and alluded to by Roman Historians, are unknown in this land which sets an example of sobriety that is admirable. No doubt, the Pariahs have their orgies, but it is the low and depressed condition of these poor people, and not their religion that is responsible for them.

But let us cast a cursory glance at the Theology of the multitude, if they have any. Eusebius of Cæsarea, in his book on the Theophaneia, gives a description of the lawless praeternaturalism of the civilized world before the triumph of Christianity, which might almost apply word for word to India at the present day. He recites how the heathens made Gods of the fruits of the earth, of their own base passions, and of animals; also how they published of certain men that "after undergoing a common mortality they became gods and demi-gods; how they made images of man and beast, and sacrificed to invisible demons; how some of their rites were shameful and their offerings bloody."

And now, if we care to enter into the interior of India, among the simple folk of the countryside, making allowance for every difference of manner, and for innumerable distinctions of detail, we may still fancy we are surrounded by Roman Polytheism. The gods whom they venerate are innumerable, and their moral qualities do not differ appreciably from those of the Olympus. Here in India men are born, live and die, but they hardly know who has made them, and for what purpose. Their ignorance in matters scientific is great indeed; but the abyss of their ignorance with

regard to the spiritual life is unfathomable. Nor are the priests much above the people. They go to their temples, and offer sacrifices mainly to propitiate evil spirits, whose victims they fancy they are. Some poor deluded people do not see any harm in presenting their daughters to the gods, though only too often such women degrade the ideal to which they were consecrated. The sacred prostitutes of Corinth have their counterpart in the Indian Devadassis; the phallic rites that were introduced into Italy from the East, have their parallel in the obscene *Tantric* rites, that are still flourishing in Bengal, and in some religious ceremonies of the *Shaktists*. With regard to the Tantras this is what we read in "*The Life and Teachings of Swami Dayanand Saraswati*" by Bawa Chajju Singh, p. 38: "No sooner had he opened one of these than he was astonished at the nature of its contents. They were so obscene, so utterly subversive of the moral and social relations which have ever existed between one member and another of a family, and between one member and another of society at large, that no one, not absolutely and openly depraved and debased, could help recoiling at the bare contemplation of what they taught."

M. N. Dutt in his introduction to the *Mahanirvana Tantram* (Calcutta, 1900) seeks to justify the cardinal Tantric Doctrine of the *Pancha Makar*, which derives its name from Madya (wine), Matsya (fish), Mamsa (meat), Maithuna (cohabitation), and Mudra (physical postures). He says that these rites should not be practised without *Shodhana* or purification, and right intention, otherwise they will be useless or even harmful. But how purification, and chiefly the intention of practising these obscenities in order to obtain spiritual power, can make good what is intrinsically bad, we do not understand. The experience of the whole human race—India not excluded—stands up against such principles.

I do not propose to give here the life of the *Puranic Krishna*, a favourite divinity in India. I merely remark how

hard it must be for Indian Reformers to put down, for instance, Nautch parties, when people find such things as the "*Rasa Dance*" consecrated by their god, or the "*Jalakrira*" or *Water-Sport*" of Krishna and the Yadava girls. Again, you may preach against lying, but what of the words of Krishna to Yudhisthira: "In marriage, in amorous dealings, when the whole of one's possessions are going to be lost, and when a Brahman's interest is at stake, untruth may be told"? Of course, it has been urged that Krishna, being a God, is above the Law. But leaving aside all metaphysical subtleties, and taking human nature as it is, it is barely conceivable that Krishna's teachings should not have the most disastrous effect on his worshippers.

This much with regard to Religion. If we look at things from a social standpoint, we are met with the fact that among Hindus there is no society properly so called. There is caste, but not society. And caste, though it arrays one section of the people against another, though it narrows the sympathies of its members, and ignores universal objective ethical standards, but often values things from a purely formal standpoint, caste is consecrated by Religion, and in India, it may be said to be the only Religion.

The objection is frequently made that the different classes of Society in the West, with their mutual antagonism and hatred, are as bad, if not worse, than caste divisions in India. But the different social classes of Europe and America are merely the result of physical and economic conditions. They are not based on the belief that God has made men essentially unequal. They are not consecrated by religious myths as they are in India. For instance Religion in the West does not prescribe the number of feet a man must keep away from his fellow-man in order not to pollute him, as it does in India. If there be class hatred in the West, it is condemned by religion not excused or encouraged. If Westerners despise one another, if one nation looks down upon

another, all ascribe it to the evil element in us, all are ashamed of it—and if they are not, they know full well that in this they are not Christians, for they run counter to the great precept: "Love thy neighbour as thyself."

Another social fact which makes an unfavourable impression, and which is consecrated by popular Indian Religion, is the miserable condition of women. Their Vedic freedom has almost entirely disappeared. The production of children, their upbringing and the superintendence of domestic affairs is all a woman has to care for in this life. The Vedas are not explained to her; all she has to do is to serve her husband, and this will make her great in heaven and on earth. Though generally she is the queen of the hearth, still Hinduism does not make her secure against possible rivals. Education she has little or none, and the movement which tends to her enlightenment, and which is inspired by the West, has been opposed in the past, though now it finds favour with important sections of the community. Enforced widowhood is the rule; and many grant that the burning of widows, which has been abolished by the British, was perhaps a better alternative to the prolonged death which widows have now to endure.

I know that among good castes, women in general, and married women in particular, are worthy to be set off as patterns of chastity and conjugal fidelity but this is due to their inherent goodness which shines forth from the darkest surroundings, as it shone at the time of Tertullian, in an environment not very different from that of India at the present day.

There is a point in Hindu Theology of direct interest to humanity in regard to its moral development, and that is the process of the soul's transmigration through incessant births and deaths, until at last it becomes absorbed in the totality of existence. This is not the place to discuss this doctrine; we may, however, say that its ethical defect, as a working scheme of moral government, is that it relieves both gods and men of individual responsibility in any single existence, and so takes

away that powerful stimulus to self improvement which comes from the clear and definite belief that we die only once, and that the period of probation will not be extended beyond this mortal life.

Essentially bound up with the *Transmigration Theory* is the doctrine of *Karma, i. e.*, the act by which the individual soul determines its future birth. "Ignorant of its true nature, it attaches itself to objects unworthy of it. Every act which it performs to gratify this attachment entangles it deeper in the perishable, world, and, as it is itself imperishable, it is condemned to a perpetual series of changes. Once dragged into the *Samsara*, it passes from one existence to another without respite and without rest." (Cfr. Barth, *The Religions of India*).

This theory has got such a tremendous hold on the Indian mind that no amount of Western culture has as yet loosened its grip. But how it is to be reconciled with human initiative and freedom, how it does not clash with the doctrine of Divine Providence, how it still allows any influence to prayer, and any interference in human affairs to Divine Mercy, no one has been able to show.* Perhaps it is largely responsible for that apathy,

***Note.* We confess that logically we prefer the mechanical theory of *Karma* as to the origin of evil, to *Melanchton's* blasphemies that "God wrought all things, evil as well as good; that He was the author of David's adultery and the treason of Judas, as well as of Paul's conversion." *Zwingle* too asserts "that God is the author, mover and impeller to sin; that also He makes the sinner; that by the instrumentality of the creature He produces injustice and the like." As to *Luther*, all know his fight with Erasmus on human freedom. "Luther asserted (and he would have this assertion maintained as an article of faith), that man is devoid of freedom; that every (pretended) free action is only apparent; that an irresistible divine necessity rules all things and that every human act is at bottom only the act of God." (Cfr. Moehler, *Symbolism*, pp. 30-40). The *Catholic Church* has always taught that the source of moral evil is the free will of the creature (angel or man). Thus we read in the Acts of the *Council of Trent* (Sess. *VI*, *Can. VI*): "If any one says that it is not in the power of man to do evil (*vias suas malas facere*), but that it is God that works evil deeds as well as good, not only by permitting them, but also by doing them truly and directly (*proprie et per se*), so that it be His own proper work not less the treason of Judas than the Vocation of Paul—*Let him be anathema*."

indifference and deep-seated pessimism which weighs on India, and which, in spite of her brilliant intellectualism, makes her so sluggish in the realization of moral ideals.

It may be that the freedom which is promised her will rouse her dormant energies, though many doubt it and foretell either a blossoming of materialistic civilization on the pattern of Japan, or a deeper entanglement in worn out superstitions producing a kind of galvanic vitality essentially transient and ephemeral.

ISLAMISM

Three great forces, however, have yet to be mentioned, which, though not indigenous, exercise a great influence on the religious and moral development of India. They are Islamism, Bolshevism and Christianity.

As to *Islamism*, someone has asserted it to be "the bond of democracy deep rooted in the faith;" and Indian Muslims have regarded it, and do still regard it, as the only possible saviour of India. It will redeem her from idolatry and polytheism on the one hand, and from caste slavery on the other. For, all Mohammedans are "Brothers in the faith," irrespective of race, colour and nationality. But, if Islam may cure India of Polytheism, it will be by substituting to it the fierce conception of a solitary God, as stern as fate, and deprived of all that sweet compassion that can shine only through the mystery of the Incarnation. Moreover, those who assert the fundamental democracy of Islam, surely forget that the system of Government in Islamic countries has always been autocratic, and often "in practice cruelly arbitrary." Again, as an acute critic has rightly remarked (Cfr. *The Times Literary Supplement* for June 28, 1928): "a slave—and slavery has been from the earliest days a Mahomedan institution, only reluctantly abandoned under pressure from the West—might be a brother in the faith to his master but his master owns him and can do what he likes with him." Also, what is the concept Islam has of womanhood?

or purity? or tolerance? Again, how can India expect salvation from Mohammedanism, or dream of a Hindu-Mohammedan brotherhood when "British administrators find it harder than ever to maintain the peace between the Mahomedan and the Hindu masses, too often ready to fly at each other's throats on the slightest religious provocation?" But we need not fear, for there are many signs pointing to the disintegration of Islam. Take Turkey, which was regarded not long ago as the last remaining bulwark of Islamic power.... Today she has dethroned Islam at the bidding of her victorious Dictator, Mustapha Kemal. The Caliphate, which constituted her title to the hegemony of Islam, has been abolished as well as the Sultanate. The Sacred Law of the Prophet has been superseded by a code modelled on those of Western countries. A modern Calendar has replaced the old Mohammedan style. Instead of the Arabic characters hallowed by the text of the Koran itself, she is to have a phonetic alphabet analogous to that of European languages. Whereas a few years ago it was a criminal offence for a Turk to wear European clothes and head-dress, today it is a criminal offence not to wear them. Whatever may be the innermost feelings of the Turkish masses, there has been no outward resistance to these violent changes; and the mosques are now almost empty when the muezzin as of old still calls the faithful to prayer." (*Ibid*). And in India where Mohammedanism has been triumphant for so many centuries, are there not signs now that "though millions may go on reciting the Mahomedan profession of faith, and Islam may for generations survive in name, the old structure of an immutable and fiercely militant creed that was one of the most cohesive forces in Asia is rapidly crumbling away wherever it is in contact with new ideals borrowed, consciously, or unconsciously, and often in a grievously distorted form, from the West?" (*Ib.*)

BOLSHEVISM

The influence of Bolshevism is greater in China than in India; still in India also there are many who look with greater

faith to Moscow than to Benares. In central Asia it has appealed to the solidarity of Islam against the Christian West "but it moulds the rising generations much more thoroughly to its purpose by supplanting Islam itself in schools and colleges with its own aggressive atheism." (*Ib.*) And shall this gods-ridden India finally turn atheistic? No doubt, Hinduism has room also for atheism in its comprehensive vagueness. Yet shall this country, so often declared to be the home of idealism, end in the most degrading materialism? For some this is simply unthinkable. Yet, as some one has rightly remarked "in different parts of Asia hundreds of thousands of brown and yellow people are constantly toiling, at the white man's behest, in cotton and jute mills, in rubber and tea and coffee plantations, in oil-fields and mines, to produce all these things and bring them to port for shipment to our markets. There are plenty to taunt them with being "the white man's hewers of wood and drawers of water;" and, if there is any truth in the taunt, it will go home. The large agglomerations of industrial workers in such centres as Bombay and Calcutta, and Hankow and Shanghai, have already organized themselves into trade unions on Western lines, but too often without any experienced leaders to guide and restrain them, or to rescue them from the professional agitators who have made it their business to inflame their growing class-consciousness already often stronger than caste or creed." (*Ib.*)

And these movements together with the fact that modern Indian Education lacks entirely the solid basis of religious teaching, fill one with sad forebodings. In his book on "*Indian Unrest,*" Valentine Chirol thus wrote in 1910: "It is, no doubt, quite impossible for the State in a country like India with so many creeds and sects, whose tenets are often repugnant to all our own conceptions not only of religion but of morality, to take any direct part in providing the religious instruction which would be acceptable to Indian parents. But was it necessary altogether to exclude such instruction from our schools and colleges? Has not its exclusion tended to create

in the minds of many Indians the belief that our professions of religious neutrality are a pretence, and that, however rigorously the State may abstain from all attempts to use education as a medium for Christian propaganda, it nevertheless uses it to undermine the faith of the rising generations in their own ancestral creeds?" Then he continues "Many Indian parents have long complained that the spirit of reverence and the respect for parental authority are being killed by an educational system which may train the intellect and impart useful worldly knowledge, but withdraws their youths from the actual supervision and control of the parents or of the *guru*, who for spiritual guidance stood *in loco parentis* under the old Hindu system of education." But when the Author comes to indicate the remedies, he is overwhelmed by the complexity of the task, and merely says: "All we have to do is to set apart, in the curriculum of our schools and colleges, certain hours during which they will be open, on specified conditions, for religious instruction in the creed in which the parents desire their children to be brought up." But what can a *moulvy* or a *pandit* teach to a young man who is being educated on Western lines? to a young man that has learned but too well to distrust all dogmatic assertions, and has made universal doubt the basis of his ill-digested science? What can they teach modern India, but a few vague generalities, which will never have a grip on their spirit? And when has Hinduism ever possessed a teaching priesthood? Schools of Philosophy it has had. But it is not Philosophy that will save India: as it was not Philosophy that could save the moral structure of ancient Greece and Rome.

CHRISTIANITY

We all know that though *Christianity* was born in Asia, it was not until it had matured a new civilization in Europe that it was imported afresh into Asia, under the aegis of the Western nations. Leaving aside for a moment the Portuguese triumphant march along the Western Coast of India, and the inspiring

example of St. Francis Xavier, we come to more modern times when Christianity, through a Western system of education, and through the vehicle of the English tongue, has made itself felt in every corner of the Peninsula. "I believe that its influence together with the consolidation of the British rule has produced among Hindus "even of the Brahminical caste, a great spontaneous movement towards religious and social reforms which all bear the stamp of Christian influences." The attitude which many an educated Indian assumes—at least on the platform—towards the depressed classes, the emancipation of women, the unity of marriage, the rights of rulers, the function of priests, is largely inspired by Christianity. But unfortunately only too often the Christianity with which he has come into contact has been a Christianity mutilated, disorganized "nor have Europeans always set the best example of Christian life.... More widespread still is the mischief wrought in recent times amongst the masses by cheap translations from the worst kind of Western novels and popular "cinemas" which exhibit the seamiest side of Western life. Even for the more thoughtful the Great War, into which the East itself was drawn, is the story of an appalling and, in its eyes, fratricidal struggle between the great Christian Powers of the world, which has gravely shaken the belief of many in the moral superiority of Christianity and of the civilization with which it stands identified." (Cfr. *Asia in travail—The Times*. 28 June 1928).

Can we say then that Christianity has lost its chance, and will never bring India to Christ, though Keshub Chunder Sen thought she would one day form the brightest jewel in His crown? For my part, convinced as I am of the inherent strength of Christian Sanctity, I firmly believe that India will one day acknowledge Jesus as the Son of the Living God. But this will be the conquest of genuine Christian Sanctity, not of Christian humanitarianism and philanthropy. India has ever dreamt of a Supreme Spiritual Power immanent in the world—and Christianity can point to a Divinity that is both immanent and ineffably

transcendent. India is the classical home of the Avatars—and Christianity is based on the Divine Incarnation, not the dream of Poets and Philosophers, but certain with the certainty of an historic fact. India is the land of the poor and the suffering—and the God of Christianity was ever poor here on earth, and died on the Cross. India has often yearned for a Supreme Love, which idealizes the sweetest love—the love of a mother—and Christianity, proclaiming the impossibility of any passive element in God, idealizes human love in Mary of Nazareth, the Virgin Mother of God. India feels the tremendous distance that separates us from the Divinity and has peopled her Pantheon with an infinity of souls enjoying for a time the fruit of their merit—and Christianity, always basing her worship on history, points to her numberless Saints, who share by grace God's life for ever more. India is still fearful of malignant spirits, who can harm poor humanity—and Christianity, though believing in the existence of the devil, holds that he is chained by the power of Christ. India is constantly offering propitiation to the invisible powers who can trouble and worry us in a thousand mysterious ways—and Christianity points out that the world is ruled by a kind Providence, to whom we offer as a daily holocaust, a pure and immaculate Victim. India has always venerated her *gurus*, though no one would even dream of asking them to exhibit historical credentials for their mission—and Christianity listens to the living voice of Christ still speaking with no uncertain accents through His Vicar here on earth. India honours asceticism and contemplation—and Christianity has canonized mortification in her Saints, and contemplation in her mystics and in her contemplative Orders. India is for ever brooding on the vanity of things—and Christianity, though conscious of the great vanity of the world, is always pointing heavenwards, and curing us of our inherent pessimism by the glorious hopes of personal and conscious immortality. India seems at times oppressed by the consciousness of sin and guilt—but Christianity proclaims that in the virtue of Christ she can wipe away our sins, and can

administer unto us the great mystery of reconciliation. India feeling that most of us leave this world covered with the dust of a weary journey, and so are unworthy of the glory of Liberation, has dreamt of a succession of countless lives of unconscious purification where, alas! the possibility of a deeper entanglement in sin has not disappeared for ever—and Christianity taking the gem hidden under all this dross, points to Purgatory, where in peace and resignation and absolute freedom from sin we shall be purified of its last remnants. India loves the display of ceremony, and the offering of incense and flowers, and the grand, inspiring processions—and Christianity allures her with the magnificence of her ceremonial and the splendour of her public worship. India has ever manifested her faith in the unseen world by erecting great temples, the wonder of all ages,—and the greatest minds and hearts in Christendom have displayed all their ingenuity and their artistic sense in praising the Creator of all in temples so magnificent that they make us catch a glimpse of heaven even here on earth. India wishes her women to be pure and modest and retired,—and Christianity is sternly opposed to the exaggerations of militant feminism, and proclaims woman to be the queen of the hearth. Yet in woman she praises virginity more than motherhood, for she knows virginity to be the mother of a wider heroism. But how few among the non-Catholics in India realize the sublimity of this divine vocation! They do not know that a Virgin is wholly devoted to the service of God, for her heart is undivided. They seem to ignore the wealth of charity and self-sacrifice which is treasured in a heart absolutely pure and undefiled. For us Catholics, the very name "Virgin" conjures up sentiments of admiration and joy, and makes us trust that not all is lost in a nation where such flowers still germinate.

And here a beautiful vision opens before my mind. I see Virgins coming from beyond the sea—from that new country which is not overburdened with the trammels of tradition, but is generous and fearless; they come supporting and encouraging one another, and they establish themselves in this land. Not

so much to teach or to work in hospitals, but to carry the glad tidings to their sisters who live in the retirement of the Zenana, and behind the veils of the Purdah. They console them, they cure them of their ailments, and they turn their hearts towards the living Christ, who alone can console the afflicted and comfort those that are burdened. We have so far neglected the women of India; and how can India be brought to Christ, if her heart is far from Him?

Again my vision broadens and becomes brighter. I see men still coming from the West, but they are detached from father, mother, wife, children, and also from their own country. And they work and toil—not so much in parishes and regular dioceses, in which numerous Indian Priests will preach the word, and administer the Sacraments of God; but they will either pray in solitude and do penance, as the Trappists and the Carthusians do, or they will preach the word of God to the poor and to the rich, to the ignorant and to the learned. If Indians, inspired by their lives of detachment and simplicity, by their generous abstinence from what allures and bewitches mankind, from wealth, with its motor cars and its villas, from pleasures, with its theatres, and cinemas, from pride, with its insatiable and cunning scheming to obtain honours and dignities and vain display—desire to join them, they can do so on terms of absolute equality and brotherly love. To the poor we preach even now. But can we say that the glad tidings are announced to the high castes? It has been shrewdly remarked by a competent writer on this subject, that "at the very outset of missionary enterprise, the progress of Christianity among the lower castes only, tended to augment tenfold the repugnance and hostility of the Brahmins and other high-caste Hindus. It cannot be too often insisted on that caste is a social as well as a religious distinction. Christianity thus not only appeared in the eyes of Hindus as a religious innovation, but as the creed of socialism and licence which allied itself with all that was lowest and most infamous in the country. In propagating opinions of

any kind, it is always hazardous to ignore the natural leaders of a community and attempt to win over the multitude without their co-operation." (*Dublin Quarterly Review*, October 1868). In the main I agree with the writer, and means must be found to bring the Word of God to the high castes. The best talents coming out to India must cease to be shut up in colleges and schools, and must be trained to work among the Brahmins and the educated.

Quomodo credent sine praedicante?... The venture is bound to fail whisper the prudent and the wise. But has it ever been fairly attempted and tried? And not only by word of mouth should we preach, but also by the written word. Journals we have already; but how many for the educated Hindu? Only one: "*The Light of the East.*" But how many among the Catholics—when they do not oppose it—help it and support it? In fact, is not the time come now when those Missionary bodies which in Europe and in America have organized "*Houses of Writers*," should band together, and pool their resources, and establish a "*House of Writers*" here in India, where some ten of them could study and write together and encourage one another to understand and deal with the problems that agitate religious India, and make an effort to captivate the attention of a country too often led astray by a corrupt, unscrupulous and incompetent Press?

Some have dreamt of a Catholic University for India. Perhaps it will come; but I do not think we shall live to see it. Yet could not years be granted to many of us to see at least our Catholic Colleges, not working each one for its own progress and numerical expansion, but joined together into a kind of *federation*, which works with a common policy and a common object? This should not be an absolute impossibility, at least in Southern India, or at the very least among those Colleges that should be already bound together more closely, as being the work of the same Society. In this direction perhaps lies the solution of the

great problem of Religious Education that troubles us all. For would not the pooling of our resources make us financially stronger, so that what appears to many as the chief difficulty to the realization of God-bringing Schools, may be removed? Again, if persecution against one single College is easy, and it is possible to starve it into a policy of unpleasant concessions, could not many Colleges more easily weather the storm, when united together, not merely in the bonds of charity, but also with the chains of a common direction and administration?

Undoubtedly, we have the right kind of goods, and the goods that India wants. But do we let India have them? *Do we even let India know that we have them?*

Now, to bring the Sanctity of Christ to this poor land my constant prayer is that Christ grant us a Leader of the type of St. Francis Xavier and Robert de Nobili. As Henry Cotton puts it "their success was due to their wonderful power of sympathy, and their rare facility of adaptation to unaccustomed modes of thought and action. They possessed in an eminent degree the apostolic faculty of being all things to all men without compromising the fundamental principles of their creed.···They displayed, on the one hand, that just conciliation which is the key-note of the principles they had to offer in dealing with other modes of thought; and, on the other, that life of example of which the effect is beyond all precept, and without which all precept is in vain. "They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends and kindred, they desired to have nothing of this world; they scarcely took the necessaries of life; attention to the body, even when needful, was irksome to them....

"They were given as an example for all religious, and ought more to excite us to make good progress than should the number of the luke-warm make us grow slack...

"Their footsteps remaining still bear witness that they were right holy and perfect men, who, waging war so stoutly, trod the world under their feet."

To summarize what has been said in this chapter: India, a noble country, but where Christianity is still foreign to the bulk of the people, shows, by contrast, the victory of Christ over Rome; for she has suffered, and will suffer moral and religious miseries similar to those of Rome as long as she does not submit to Christ. Just as the Sanctity of Christ has succeeded in working out the destruction of Ancient Paganism, and in compelling Society to revise its religious and ethical values, so it will do the same for India.

But besides Christianity, there are two other forces striving to mould the future of India. One is Mahomedanism, which, however, is bound to fail; for its monotheism is tainted, its vaunted democracy has little reality, and we see it already succumbing—at least among those that form its élite—under the influence of the West. The second is Bolshevism, whose atheistic and materialistic ideals are gaining ground, chiefly among town-workmen, and students in godless Colleges.

However, as in Europe and in America, the only force that can save Indian Society from moral destruction is true Christianity.

Christianity, which has spread with the spreading of the knowledge of English, has already exercised a certain influence, which, however, is counteracted by the bad lives of many Christians, by bad Western novels and theatres and chiefly by the terrible spectacle of the Great War.

Yet I believe, and firmly believe, that Christian Sanctity will finally bring India to Christ, and thus will be India's salvation—

a) On account of the inherent beauty and strength of the inheritance of Christ, which satisfies, corrects and transcends, all that is best in India's aspirations and tendencies;

b) also because I hope Christian Virgins will finally succeed in winning to Christ the Womanhood of India;

c) again, because I have faith in the work of detached and holy Missionaries, who, rather than carry on the ordinary duties of the Clergy, will pray and do penance; will preach to the poor and to the wealthy, by word of mouth and through the Press; will take the first steps towards the establishment of a Catholic Centre of Higher Studies; and

d) that this may be realized, I pray that Christ grant us a leader of the type of St. Francis Xavier, a real Saint, and an inspiring leader of Saints.

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CHAPTER VIII

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN SANCTITY

Up to now we have considered Christ's ideal of Sanctity in relation to the purely human ideal of moral perfection. We have seen how Christ's ideal was entrusted to a Society, which has preserved it in its purity against internal and external attacks. In addition we have briefly described the effects of Christian Sanctity on the early Church and on the ancient world, and we have endeavoured to show that the transformation of the Roman Empire was due to the Church, first because the Church alone supplied those principles that made such a transformation possible, and secondly, because most of the evils of the Roman Empire are seen to exist in countries like India, where the Church has not yet been accepted. Only we must remember that though Christianity is not formally embraced by the majority in India, her influence is not absent altogether.

Even the most superficial observer will remark how the traditional beliefs about the worth of man, the value of the child, the position of woman, and a thousand others are changing, and gradually assuming an undeniably Christian colouring. The whole Indian atmosphere in which superstitions once flourished, is now different. Old preternatural beliefs, old customs and ideas are "like icebergs that have at last floated into a warmer sea, and topple over at the invisible melting of their submarine base."

Now let us study a little more closely some other aspects of Christian Sanctity, in order to understand its nature more intimately. We shall do this chiefly by way of contrast with the Sanctity of that Society from which the Church herself sprang up, in so far as it was the initial centre of that wave of spiritual energy which the Church has spread over the world.

(A)

THE SAINTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

However, before we definitely set about to compare the Jewish and the Christian ideals of holiness, it is good to dwell at some length on the Biblical manifestations of sanctity, for it is there that the tree of the Cross has its roots; it is from there that some of its flowers and fruits derive their peculiar fragrance and taste.

When I think of Jewish sanctity my mind wanders back to the years of my childhood, when I was first taught Bible History; and the noble figures of Joseph, Moses, and a host of others, pass again before my eyes. *Joseph*, so wise and obedient, so chaste and forgiving! His story is so human, and at the same time so full of elevating thoughts and examples.

And the character of *Moses!* Of course, this is not the place to narrate his achievements, which, moreover, are well known. Listen, however, to his earnest appeal to the children of Israel: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising. And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be and shall move between thy eyes, and thou shalt write them in the entry, and on the doors of thy house." (Deut. VI, 4-9). What earnestness and solicitude that the great commandment should ever be planted in the heart of Israel! Surely only a man aflame with the love of God could speak thus. Later literalists will take the words of Moses in the most material sense; yet even thus they testify that, in spite of many partial defections, Israel never allowed them to disappear from its heart.

Or again, let us open the Canticle for the Remembrance of the Law: "The ways of God are perfect, and all his ways are judgments (just); God is faithful and without any iniquity, he is just and right. They have sinned against him, and are none of his children in their filth; they are a wicked and perverse generation. Is this the return thou makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? Is not he thy Father, that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee?" (Deut. XXXII, 4-6).

Here the Fatherhood of God is very clearly proclaimed, and our duty to love Him is insisted upon with Evangelical warmth and earnestness. Sin is set forth in all its ugly nakedness, as an act of ingratitude towards God, most just, holy, and loving. Now, the love of God and the abhorrence of sin are the two great pillars which support the arch of man's sanctity; seeing them thus firmly established by Moses, one may already surmise what marvellous heights Christian sanctity is destined to reach, when its foundations are so noble and profound. This depth and excellence would appear in even greater relief had we the time to contrast it with the moral and theological emptiness of the seers venerated by other nations. But it will be more profitable to delve into the rich Biblical mines, which Jesus Christ has bestowed on us, as a heirloom of untold value and inestimable spiritual wealth.

In Christian lands *Job* has ever been regarded as the model of patience; and though we admit that the treatment of the marvellous drama is not wholly historical, we maintain that it is founded on history, and that Job really did exist and did suffer. But even apart from this, the Theology of the book sank deep into the heart of Israel. It is from there that the Jews learnt to regard suffering in general as the *punishment of sin*, as a kind of *admonition*, that keeps man from sinning, as a *medicine*, so to speak, that cures us of pride, lust and avarice, and finally as a *trial* of virtue and patience. These very sound views have been treasured up in the Catholic Church, where, however, suffering

and crosses have assumed a higher significance. The confidence of Job in God Almighty and his trust in his Creator are admirable. "Although he should kill me, I will trust in him," (Job XIII, 15) Job cried out in the midst of his sorrow, "for, behold, my witness is in heaven, and he that knoweth my conscience is on high," (XVI, 20). How many Saints both Jewish and Christian have found comfort in these words in the hour of trial, when they were abandoned or despised by men!

It has been well said that the religious soul of a people is mirrored in its hymns, and the *Psalter* is the Hymn-Book of Israel, wherein are expressed its sentiments of penance and contrition, of confidence and trust, and, at the same time, of fierce anger and imprecation. There we find its hopes in the Messiah, who is described now in glowing colours as the King triumphant, now in plaintive and sorrowful accents, as one "poured out like water," whose heart "is become like wax melting in his bowels;" and who says of himself "they have dug my hands and feet. They have numbered all my bones." (Ps. XXI).

In the Psalms we hear the heavens sing the glory of the Lord, we rejoice in His magnificence and we rest assured that those who love Him will be blessed for ever.

St. Jerome relates that the Palestinian peasants of his time used to sing the Psalms whilst working in the fields, and there is there such an abundance of beautiful feelings, ejaculations and expressions of love as to supply a devout soul with the choicest food for prayer and sweet converse with God. Here is a short specimen, which can be used profitably as a preparation for the morning meditation:

O God, my God, to thee do I watch at break of day.

For thee my soul hath thirsted; for thee my flesh, O how many ways!

In a desert land, and where there is no way, and no water: so in the sanctuary have I come before thee, to see thy power and thy glory.

For thy mercy is better than lives: thee my lips shall praise.

Thus will I bless thee all my life long: and in Thy name I will lift up my hands.

Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips. (Ps. LXII).

The Church has always held the Psalms in the highest esteem, and she orders her priests to recite them all at least once a week, in the Breviary. Thus they have become part of her official prayer, and will rise up like sweet incense to God till the end of time.

The names of the merciful *Tobias* and the chaste *Susanna* are household words throughout Christendom.

The *Prophets* present another and most peculiar aspect of the Sanctity of Israel. They were raised by the Lord, who revealed to them his secret, (Amos III, 7), and "filled them with the strength of his spirit, with judgment and power, to declare unto Jacob his wickedness, and to Israel his sin." (Mich. III, 8). Some of them occupied positions of trust at court, and were otherwise public men. Others were persecuted both by the Kings and their grandees, but their courage did not fail them, and they stood up for the rights of justice and holiness. Typical of these was *Elias*, of whom it is said that he "stood up as fire, and his word burnt like a torch." (Ecclus. XLVIII, 1).

Of the Major Prophets *Isaias* is the most sublime. The glorious vision he saw in the temple (Ch. VI) never faded from the eyes of Israel. He spoke to them of God, the Creator, who is the first and the last, who is Omniscient, the Ruler of all nations, the Holy One of Israel.

Through Israel He wishes to work the salvation of mankind; but Israel is a failure; and then the Redeemer is promised, suffering and glorious, the Man of Sorrows, and the King of all nations.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and they that shall escape of the house of Jacob, shall lean no more upon him that striketh them; but they shall lean upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel in truth. The remnant shall be converted, the remnant, I say, of Jacob, to the mighty God." (X, 20-21).

But later, salvation is promised to all who will forsake their ways, and return to the Lord, "for he is bountiful to forgive." (LV, 7). The same lofty spirit breathes through the plaintive accents of *Jeremias*, the rugged grandeur of *Ezechiel*, and the prayerful longings of *Daniel*. And as we proceed through the History of the Jews, their faith seems to increase, their hope waxes stronger, and their love for God grows more ardent and sincere. The Captivity was for them a fire that purified them, and made their virtues shine brighter before the Lord. After the Captivity no leanings towards idolatry, no truce with the sons of Belial.

Remember the inspiring pages of the *Machabees*, instinct with love of religion and country; the slaughter of unresisting Jews on the Sabbath, the defiling of the temple, and then the glorious wars of Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers. The martyrdom of Eleazar and the seven brothers with their mother is one of the finest episodes in the history of mankind, hardly surpassed by the faith, and courage of the Christian martyrs.

And in later days, when the Pharisees and the Sadducees were in the ascendant, the people remained good, and deeply religious. We have no right to think that the House of Zachary, a glimpse of which we enjoy in the opening chapters of St. Luke, was a solitary exception in Israel. Again the enthusiasm which arose among the people at the beginning of the public life of

our Lord, the eagerness with which they followed Him, their insatiable desire of listening to His sacred words, testify to a deep religious sense, a living faith and charity, which all the formalism of the Scribes and the official interpreters of the Law, had been unable to starve out.

(B)

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN SANCTITY COMPARED

Yet there were some peculiar traits of Jewish Sanctity, which plainly show that the system was but a preparation, a kind of historical and moral introduction to Christianity. I do not think I am exaggerating if I number among them the characteristic of *exclusivism.* The whole Jewish nation had been chosen to carry through the centuries the hope of mankind, the promise of the Redeemer. Hence it had to be defended from the inroads of idolatry and corruption, it had to be kept pure by a host of Laws and Ordinances, which were mainly drawn up to protect it from evil. Now, if we consider Christianity, and especially the Catholic Church, we know that from the beginning she was appointed to carry the faith of the Redeemer, the fulfilment of the promise, to all nations. Consequently *her Sanctity is diffusive—rather than exclusive,* or better, it is exclusive by its very being diffusive—like a conqueror who protects himself not by erecting walls against his enemies, but by subjugating them.

It was otherwise with the Jews. To guard against idolatry, they adored only one God, and *banished* from their mode of worship *all images and relics.* Thus, even though they honoured the Saints, their veneration lacked most of those external helps which are to be found profusely in the Catholic Church. The latter, whilst adoring only one God and paying homage to the Saints, venerates also their images and relics. Thereby she is less stern and more human, less exclusive and more kind. Images and relics are not a hindrance to her

devotion; they rather help her to approach nearer to God, and show her gratitude and admiration for the Saints who are His special friends. Her children are not so prone to idolatry as the Jews were. If you give them wings they use them to rise towards the sky, not to sink to the ground; if you give them oars, they do not make their boat heavier, they only increase its speed.*

Again, the Old Law, especially of later days, to ensure the strict Monotheism of the Jews, and to maintain their national Religion undefiled, guarded them most carefully against the *religious practices and rites of other nations.* Their vitality was not strong enough to change poison into wholesome food. So the brethren of the dispersion have to keep in touch with the Holy City, and to look up to the Temple as the only true House of God. They may have meeting halls and synagogues but not temples.

The Christians on the contrary, keep in touch with a living voice, not with a dead temple: they have a centre of authority and doctrine not of worship. Their Churches are all over the world, and in each one of them the God-Man dwells in reality and listens to them, consoles them, and feeds them with His very Flesh and Blood.

And the Church is not afraid of the *rites and ceremonies of other Religions.* She has the power to change their inner meaning to transform their *raison d'etre.* She is like a living plant that absorbs its food from the ground, and gives it life. She takes Roman temples and makes of them Christian Basilicas; she adopts oriental rites and vestments, and weaves them into a

* So the Protestants, who have rejected the worship of the saints have gone backward rather than forward. Perhaps they had noticed some abuses in the practice of this devotion, but instead of uprooting them they uprooted the devotion itself. Children make blunders in using the multiplication table; but why should the masters take it away from them? Many Protestants have finally seen their mistake and now take up again the once detested Romish practices.

mystical ceremonial which for grandeur and sublimity has never been equalled. Incense and flowers were presented to the gods; she offers them to God and to His Holy Mother. The humble folk are fond of amulets; she teaches them how foolish it is to rely on the fancied properties of inanimate matter, while they should place all their confidence in God and in His Saints; and to remind them of this, she gives them relics and blessed medals. Peasants used to take idols round their fields in the hope of gaining the divine favour on their crops. The Jews denounced the superstitious practice, but the Church goes further. She not only tells the people that idols are mere stones, perhaps inhabited by the devil; but she establishes instead rogation days, she encourages processions and religious functions to call down God's blessings on her children.

Antiquity had its places of pilgrimage and its oracles, where the ignorant went to know the future or to enjoy a holiday. The Church condemns astrology and divination, but encourages her children to visit the places sanctified by the presence of our Lord, or by apparitions of Angels and Saints; because she knows that thus their faith will grow more lively, and the links that bind them to the supernatural world grow stronger.

She spiritualizes all things, she finds God in all things, for in Him we live, we move and have our being. Superficial writers collect all these facts and many more, and scoff at the Church, as if she were but a travesty of Paganism, forgetting all the while the deep instincts of human nature, and disregarding the fact that, if some of the bottles are old, the wine is new and strong. They are as ridiculous as he who would call St. Peter's a pagan temple because the stones with which it is built have been taken from ruined pagan edifices.

Another though indirect consequence of the exclusivism of the Jewish Law was its *formalism*. The number of ceremonies a Jew had to perform in his religious and social life was something incredible. This trait, too, served to single him out among the

nations, and to keep him pure; but at the same time it had the tendency to blunt his moral sense, or to make him liable to mistake external observances for internal devotion. The prophets insisted on purity of heart, and on the vanity of lip service, and the people, on the whole, responded to their efforts. As we have shown above, the moral level of the Jewish nation, chiefly after the Captivity, was very high; so was their spiritual sense keen to perceive, and open to accept, supernatural influences. But gradually the higher ranks of the Priesthood came to be filled by men engrossed in political and carnal pursuits, who, if they cared much for the outward splendour of the temple, were little concerned with its inner significance. The very respect and reverence for the Law developed a sect, earnest and faithful in the beginning, which, however, turned, by and by, into the narrowest literalism, and evolved the Pharisee, so scathingly exposed by Jesus Christ, and held up to the scorn of all ages, as the type of hypocritical zeal, and perverse and easily scandalized religiosity.

The Church too, as we have already remarked, recognized the importance of ceremonial, and surrounded her mysteries with the most august and devotional actions. But she has always insisted that it is the mysteries that count, not the ceremonies. It is not a genuflexion, nor the making of the sign of the Cross, nor the saying of some fixed prayer at fixed times, nor a novena or triduum, that will save us—but the spirit of faith and charity reigning in our hearts. Such however is the connection between internal devotion and the external action that the one cannot be very strong, nor endure long without influencing the other. It is like the fire in an iron stove; if there be plenty of coal, and if the draught is good, the stove too will soon become red-hot. Besides, the ceremonies of the Church are not divine ordinances as many Jewish ceremonies were, and therefore supposed to be unchangeable by man. Most of them are of her own institution and can be varied according to her wisdom. Again, her ceremonies are chiefly to be observed by her Priests, not by the

faithful. These enjoy the freedom of the children of God, whom they honour in spirit and truth.*

Finally, Jewish exclusivism resulted in Jewish isolation from the world, and in Jewish hatred of the world. In point of fact, it is true that the Jews possessed the truth, as far as it went, but what did they do to communicate it to others? We leave aside ancient Judaism, where the proselytizing spirit was too often tainted with the spirit of self-aggrandizement. The glorious prophecies, where the Kingdom of God is viewed spreading out its tents "from the sea even unto the sea," and Jerusalem is seen as "the house of the Lord (which) shall be prepared on the top of the mountains, and (it) shall be exalted above the hills, and all the nations shall flow unto it," (Is. II) foretell the extension of God's Kingdom as fulfilled in Jesus Christ, not the conquests of the Palestianian Jerusalem.

From the time of the Captivity the sons of Israel, now spread throughout the nations, testified to a genuine desire of making the truth known among the Gentiles. Tobias exhorted his brethren to praise the Lord "because he hath scattered you among the Gentiles who know not him, that you may declare his wonderful works and make them know that there is no other almighty God besides Him." (Tob. XIII).

* Notwithstanding a few Ritualists of recent growth, the bulk of the Protestants found even Christian ceremonies too many, and so did away with most of them. But they forgot that human nature needs ceremonies almost as much as it needs diversion and exercise. Perhaps the Northerners are more reserved; but what of the Southerners? If you deprive them of all externals, what will they keep of your religion? And even of the Northerners, there will be perhaps a few educated persons that can dispense—more or less—with ceremonies and external devotions. But what of the crowd? Do away with externals and you will obtain a hot-house religion, not a living mode of worship. Then indeed, the way to heaven will be narrow, and few will walk in it. The Protestants did away with ceremonies, and so they lost much of their influence on the poor and ignorant; they rejected "superstitious" rites, as they called them, and the interior spirit too has gradually vanished.

But soon the unbending spirit of the Jews, and their want of adaptability, made all efforts futile. Our Lord taunted the Pharisees with the famous words: "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you go round about the sea and the land, to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him the child of hell two-fold more than yourselves." (Matt. XXIII).

Now let us turn to Christianity, and in particular to the Catholic Church. Jesus Christ has hardly left the Apostles, when, filled with the Holy Spirit they leave Judea and go to Samaria, Syria, Mesopotamia, Greece, Italy, and Spain. Persecutions and death do not frighten them. They brave the strength of the Roman Empire; they conquer it; and then gradually they conquer the world. Ere the first century A. D. closes, the Faith is known to practically all the Mediterranean races, and is established throughout the Roman Empire. The Church of Christ possesses a divine treasure and therefore wants to communicate it. Her missionaries spread far and wide.

St. Augustine of Canterbury converts England; St. Patrick, Ireland; St. Remi baptizes the Franks; St. Boniface, the Germans; SS. Cyril and Methodius bring the Slavs under the sway of Christ. This Missionary Spirit is one of the most beautiful traits of Christian Sanctity, a feature which has won the admiration of thoughtful men of all ages. As God, though infinitely happy in Himself, shares His happiness with others, and creates an infinity of worlds among which to scatter His gifts broadcast, so the true Christian makes himself an apostle to communicate to others his divine faith and treasures. He does not conquer with the sword, as Mahomed did, but with the Cross. It is not the Princes that extend Christianity, it is the Saints. And these do not leave their country accompanied by wives and children, but live in perfect chastity; they do not go abroad as the disguised agents of mercantile firms, or to promote the interests of their own people or nation. Often it is Obedience

that sends them out, and generally it is a life of poverty and sacrifice that they have to live. Though modern evangelizing methods have changed--still as the Church of the XVI and XVII centuries could point to a Francis Xavier leaving Europe with scarcely anything more than a Breviary, or to a John de Britto exchanging the Court of Portugal for a hut among Indian ryots; so the Church of the XIX and XX centuries can point to a Father Damien who gives his life for the lepers, and to thousands of others who toil in obscurity, among contradictions, often to reap disappointments and ingratitude even from their own.

Jewish sanctity besides being exclusive was, also a *sanctity of expectation.* Their eyes were continually turned towards the future, their whole life was a life of waiting for, and hope in, "the One Who had come." This had some very important consequences. Though their salvation depended on their faith in the Messias, as it does for us Christians, their faith however, together with the virtues which accompany it, was different from the faith and virtue of the Christians. Their faith was towards a future which could hardly throw its shadow on the present; ours turns to the past which is continued in the present. Their knowledge of the Messias—which *God* had given them through the *Prophets*—was slight; ours, which we obtain in the Gospels, is abundant and more easily grasped. Hence they hoped in Christ, but they could not love Him with the same love that is possible for us. They loved Him or rather they desired Him as their future Liberator; we love Him as our present Redeemer. They loved Him implicitly in God; we love Him explicitly as God. They could not feel for Him that personal love, which is the characteristic of Christians; and since knowledge and personal love were lacking, the desire to imitate Him and to be like Him was lacking also. They, of course, love God; and their literature is full of the most beautiful expressions of confidence and trust in Him, of desire to be entirely His, of exultation in His Goodness, Truth and Glory.

But there is not that simplicity, that intimacy, that oneness of feeling with God which we find in Christian prayers, or which we read of in the lives of Christian Saints. Jesus Christ has brought God to the same level as man, for in Him God is really man, and so He has fulfilled the one essential condition of a love of friendship, which is equality. Hence in the Church we find the possibility of such manifestations of love as the devotion to the Sacred Heart, a devotion so tender, so human and so divine, that it is alone a perfect proof of the divinity of Catholicism.

Again, we see in the Christians a desire to imitate God in Christ, which was necessarily absent in the Jews, and which is absent in every other religion, but Catholicism. Since, however, the life of God in Christ has been realized as a life of suffering and humiliation, we notice also (in the Christian saint at least) a desire for suffering and humiliation which no other creed or sect can show. The saints of the Old Testament and the good men of other religions are patient and resigned under the hand of God, who tries them in the fire of tribulation. They have faith in His final justice, they look forward to a future life which will do away with, and atone for, the injustices of the present one. The Christian saint, on the contrary, understands that the law of life is sorrow, and he not only does not *accuse God* of heartlessness and cruelty but he loves God and exults in sorrow and tribulation, for he sees that God Himself has fulfilled His own law of sorrow in the Man of Sorrows. Christ is for him the proof that "the worst suffering may be the highest blessing," that "to be forsaken and despised of the world is not to be forsaken of God." In Christ suffering and desolate, he realizes that God loves him, and in that realization his complaints are hushed, his tears are dried. The Crucified One proclaims that "it is necessary to suffer in order to enter into the kingdom of God," and His disciples are eager to follow Him in the path of sorrow; they "rejoice in every tribulation," they are grieved not to share the sufferings of Christ, they have even desired death

rather than a life without suffering. This change of perspective with regard to the most awful problems of our life, the existence of evil, is to be seen not only in a St. Paul, a St. Teresa, or a St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi—souls intoxicated with the love of God, souls who could truly say: 'I live now not I but Christ liveth in me'—but in thousands and millions of others, of every age and sex, of every condition and nation, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. To test the truth of this it is sufficient to read the Acts of the Martyrs or the lives of the Saints. They were so eager to suffer for Christ that the Church had to pass regulations to restrain their enthusiasm; they loved the Cross of Jesus so much that they gloried in it and found in it all peace and consolation.*

Another and most important consequence of the fact that the Sanctity of the Jews was a Sanctity of expectation, was their conception of the end of man. Though the conception of immortality was never absent in the history of the Jews, whatever Rationalists may say, and though the expressions regarding the future life which we find in the Psalms and especially in the later books of the Old Testament are quite clear and definite—still, since the Redeemer had not yet come, they did not fully realize that the life of the righteous in heaven was a life of glorified love and perfect knowledge of God. For them dying meant going to their Fathers, receiving the reward of their virtues and living a life of indefinite happiness. Very

* This splendid characteristic of Christian Sanctity is not common among Protestant Sects. They do not seem to make much of it, and rather than attempt to prove the truth of their claims from the number and quality of their saints, they often find proofs in the prosperity of their commerce, the figures of their imports and exports, the extent of their industries, the flourishing condition of their vast colonies. Thereby they shift our ideals from heaven to earth, and they change our standard from the Cross to the pound sterling. We sometimes find the Jews too gross and materialistic when they measured their justice from the abundance of their harvest. But some modern Protestant Missionaries, and even Bishops, do not soar much higher, and by their utterances make Christianity the laughing stock of more idealistic and spiritual heathens.

rarely, if ever, do they speak of eternal life as of a life of glory similar to the glory of the Lord.* For the many

> It was a land of shadows: yea the land
> Itself was but a shadow; and the race
> That dwelt there were but voices, forms of forms,
> And echoes of themselves.

Therefore, the outward means too, which the Jews had in order to attain to the life in which they believed, and which was in fact awaiting them, were typical and figurative, not efficacious; they were a shadow more than a reality. Their laws, their rites, their temple and their Priesthood foreshadowed future grace, they did not possess an actual and immanent energy of sanctification. They directed the Jews in the path of virtue, but they did not of themselves give them internal supernatural grace.

For the Christians—on the contrary—heaven is infinitely more than "the abode of the fathers" or a place of happiness, or "an elysian garden curtained with splendour, and crowded with good things." Though his *imagination*, the descriptions he reads, the pictures he sees, tell him of a kind of court where God sits on His throne, and he beholds Him as a courtier beholds his king, *he knows* that all this is but a shadow of a wonderful divine reality "which ear hath not heard, nor eye hath ever seen." *He knows* that, though heaven means rest, it is not inactive rest; it means reunion, harmony, peace and beauty, but it is not merely that. Heaven is the vision of God as He is in Himself; it is the possession of God, the love of God, the life of God entering, in a new and ineffable way, the life of the soul and becoming its very soul. As the light of the sun enters a crystal and changes it into a thing of light and colour, so God will enter into us and manifest Himself to us, and change us—as it were—into Himself.

This is heaven; and whilst Christians love to try and form pictures of it, they know that the reality is far above their

* See, however, Ps. XV, 16; Dan. XII, 2 etc.

imaginings. It is like the difference between the written word "music" and a sonata of Beethoven; like the difference between the written word "nature" and the splendours of the heavens, the majesty of the mountains, the immensity of the sea, the mystery of the spirit of man. This is the heaven a Christian expects; and since the goal is so far above his natural strength, he believes that it is only God that can fit him for it. God indeed gave grace to the Jews also; but whilst for the Jews He had established no outward, visible means of the nature of the Sacraments in order to reach it, He has established such means for the Christians. As when our Lord Jesus Christ was upon earth, He worked miracles, and remitted sin by external words and deeds, so now He works in His Church through a visible Priesthood and material rites, which are in His Hands the instruments of our sanctification. He sows the seed which will eventually blossom into eternal glory.

Therefore whilst in the Synagogue, God gave grace to man through man's activity, or as the technical phrase has it, *ex opere operantis,* in the Church He gives grace to us through other means, which are as it were His own activity (*ex opere operato*). Our sanctification does not depend so much on our exertions, as on the immanent virtue of the Sacraments, which will infallibly clothe us with sanctifying grace, provided we do not put obstacles and barriers against it.

Hence, Jewish rites and Sacraments, owing to the lack of intrinsic supernatural virtue, helped to love God, as a sermon, or a grand procession, or a good spiritual book do help to the same end, more as occasions of spiritual profit, than as instruments and channels of grace. Christian sacraments, on the contrary, give us supernatural life, foster it and perfect it by their own intrinsic power; and so they make us partakers of the Divine Nature, children of God and heirs of His ineffable and eternal glory.*

* As we have attempted to make it clear, this sacramental power is not a kind of *magic*, as Protestants are fond of saying. It is the result of

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Christ's indwelling in the Church and energizing the Sacraments by His own Divine Activity. In the words of St. Augustine: "It is Christ Himself who baptizes us in the Holy Ghost; for, He has not ceased to baptize, but does it still; not indeed by the action of His physical body, but by the work of His invisible Majesty." (M. 43, 379).

Protestantism, by rejecting this doctrine, has repudiated one of the most essential dogmas of Christianity, which both explains and maintains its perennial Sanctity—and has sunk to the level of natural religion, or, at least, of the pre-Christian economy of justification. Happily there is now among the Protestant Divines a strong current towards the reacceptance of the traditional Catholic Doctrine.

CHAPTER IX

PROTESTANTISM AND SANCTITY

GENERAL REMARKS

These studies would be incomplete if no endeavour were made to understand the relations which the Protestant sects, that live side by side with the Catholic Church, bear to Sanctity. It is not possible, however, to deal with the innumerable Protestant movements, many of which are but local growths, and, for all we know, may have been started by men of real piety and excellent intention. We shall therefore treat mainly of the great Protestant denominations, which had their beginnings in Germany, Switzerland and England, at the time of the so-called Reformation.

What strikes at the outset the student of the history of Protestantism is the character of its founders. Though we do not affirm that in order to carry out His plans, God must needs choose a Saint, still common sense refuses to believe that the Sanctity of God will make use of a proud man to teach humility, or of an impure man, a man who loves the comforts of life, who is grasping and avaricious, to preach a real Reformation of morals. This principle does not contradict the doctrine that the efficacy of a Sacrament does not depend on the moral worth of the minister. Preaching and teaching are not sacramental works; nor is the starting of a Reforming Movement, in which old institutions are swept aside as evil or useless, and old doctrines are pronounced scandalous and devilish, to be put on a par with the carrying on of ordinary religious functions in a subordinate and *essentially ministerial* capacity.

Now if you read the life of LUTHER, however much you may be struck by his fearlessness, his eloquence, his power of

leadership (all of which are but natural gifts), you cannot fail to be painfully surprised at his pride, his unscrupulousness, his slanderous disposition and his lack of moral balance and logical consistency.

ULRICH ZWINGLI—the first Swiss innovator—was equally proud and haughty, and had long given scandal to the people by openly living in sin with a widow, Anna Reinhard.

CALVIN, as a theologian "was far superior to the superficial Zwingli; he far surpassed Luther too, in erudition and general consistency. But the characteristics of this Reformer were haughtiness, harshness and bitterness. In his treatment of his opponents he resembled Luther, particularly in his use of abusive language. The latter is more given to the exhibition of a furious and insolent wrath, while with Calvin the malice is more profound, and bitterness predominates." (Brueck: History of the Catholic Church, Vol. II, p. 181, English translation).

We need not speak of the adulterous, overbearing and cruel HENRY VIII, or of the Virgin Queen ELIZABETH. The *more intelligent* among the Anglicans, though not so numerous as one might wish, are ashamed to acknowledge them as the Founders of the Anglican Communion, and rightly so.

This being the Character of the Reformers, no wonder that we doubt the virtue and sanctity of the Reformation itself. Besides, if we study the direct moral effects of the Reformation among the people, our doubts as to its sanctifying power are increased. We cannot here enter into details; we must remain satisfied with a few quotations.

LUTHER himself was loud in his complaints "concerning the parlous state of morals amongst the adherents of the new teaching, and the almost entire absence of any practical fruits of piety under the amended Gospel" . . . He made no odds about referring to these results and their real cause; "The surer we are of the freedom won by Christ, the more indolent do we become,"

"because we teach that man attains to grace without any works whatever, we grow lazy;" he almost wishes "that the old teaching again came into its own." His shortsightedness and the psychological effect of his passionate temper prevented his forseeing the inevitable consequences of his theory of the all-sufficiency of faith and of his reckless denunciation of the regard for commandments and works previously obtaining. How little his own frequent exhortations to lead a moral life and to perform works of Christian charity would prevail against the fell charm of the doctrine of Evangelical freedom, remained hid from his eyes, until the extent of the moral corruption and the growing savagery of the people in certain regions began to frighten him and to cause him to long ardently for the end of the world, and even to predict its imminence."

REGIUS, a cautious and moderate Lutheran, who died in 1541, as General Superintendent of Luneburg, thus summed up his experiences of the effect of Luther's doctrine of Evangelical freedom upon the people, in the sermons he delivered at Hall in the Tyrol; "The rude, carnal people here think that the Law has been abolished and that we are released from it, so that we can do as we please; hence quite shamelessly and to the disgrace of the Evangel, they say: To steal and to commit adultery is no longer sinful, for the law is no more of any account...."

"The complaints current among Luther's friends about the bad effects of the doctrine of justification were even heard long after the tumults of the earliest religious struggles were over.

"For this reason we are not justified in regarding the decline which followed in the train of the new system of faith, as a mere episode in the history of civilization, as simply that inevitable after-effect of the great upheaval in the intellectual world. It has been argued that far-reaching and disturbing changes in public life are usually accompanied by an increase of immorality among the masses, and also that the disorders dating from the Catholic times bore fruit only when brought in

contact with the new religion. Unfortunately in the present case we have to do with conditions which, as later witnesses show, persisted even when tranquility had once more been restored and when the fruits of the new ideas should already have ripened. "What is here disclosed," justly remarks Döllinger, "was the result of a system already firmly established, no mere after-effect of former conditions, but a true home-produce continuing to flourish even when the thousand ties which had once linked human life and consciousness with the olden Church had long been torn and rent asunder, and the memory of the doctrines, imagery, practices and institutions of that Church had either been completely forgotten by the people, or were known to them only through controversial references made in their pulpits and in the manuals of religious institutions." (Cfr. Grisar: Luther, Vol. IV, pp. 464-468 etc.).

THE CASE OF ANGLICANISM

Still, after the lapse of four centuries the Religious denominations or Reformed Churches may have improved; they have perhaps ceased to lay such a stress on justification by faith alone, and have gone nearer to the source of Christian sanctity. Or, the effects which we have mentioned, may have been due to doctrines and tenets peculiar to Lutheranism rather than to Protestantism. Take for instance the Anglican Church. She has never been so radical in her teaching on justification by faith alone; she has never condemned good works; though she has not favoured religious vows, fasting, and bodily mortifications, she has ever kept the golden mean. Besides, of the Reformed bodies she alone can be called a true church. The others have no Bishops properly so called, the Anglican Church has them; they have no Mass, no imposing religious services, she has them (!); they have no Cathedrals, no Cathedral chapters, no Canons, she has them all. She is honoured by many as a loving mother, as the Church of their Baptism, the Church of Confirmation and Holy Communion. She is not stern and rigid; she knows the human

heart, and she respects the human intellect. She has formed the English people just, honourable, truthful, brave and enduring. So speak many Anglicans, and they believe what they say. But waiving aside several points of this effusion, which have little or nothing to do with our subject—we may ask what is really meant by the word "*Church*" or "*Anglican Church.*" The Creed which a good many Anglicans still recite, speaks of the Church being *Catholic*; but where does the Anglican Church exist outside English-speaking countries? It insists on the Church being *one;* but how is she one, and who is her spiritual head? They say they have their Bishops; but are her Bishops at all necessary to her constitution? She is a mother; but what does she teach her children? Is there any authority in her hierarchy? Can her Bishops impose even a single dogma on the faithful? Do her Bishops agree as to the meaning of even a single doctrine? Are they then the messengers of God on earth? and if they are, where is their message? And if they have no message to deliver, how can they form a Church?

For, either a Church exists in order to teach what Christ taught, or *she is no Church at all.* Therefore, though the so called Anglican Church may not have had the same baneful effects on public morality as Lutheranism, how can she be called holy? Christian holiness is based on Faith. Faith is based on teaching, teaching is based on authority, and authority on infallibility. This, Anglicanism does not possess, and glories in not possessing; therefore Anglicanism cannot supply the only solid basis of Christian Sanctity—which is Faith.

We do not deny that many Anglicans are holy and really holy. We rejoice in their number and wish they should increase a thousandfold. But if they are holy they do not owe it to Anglicanism. Their Church supplies them with views and opinions, not with faith; it may give them a kind of theology, not vital religion; it may even furnish them with some sort of Christianity, but a Christianity without revelation. For how can there be revelation, Christianity and faith where there is no

authoritative teaching? And if faith is lacking how can there be *Christian* Sanctity?

But perhaps we have been fighting against shadows, or, like Don Quixote, have spent our energies against windmills. No Anglican worthy of the name will maintain that the function of his Church is to supply us with a basis for our sanctification in the intellectual order. He will grant that in order to honour God we must know him, that in order to love our Saviour we must believe in Him—but these beliefs can be obtained from the Bible, not from the Church. Similarly, it is from the Bible, he will say, that we must find out the meaning of Christian Sanctity and learn a practical way of fulfilling Christ's word in the Imitation of the Heavenly Father. Christian Revelation does not come from a Church which is merely the outward social expression of our faith, which comes to us from the Bible.

Let it be that Revelation comes to us from the Bible. But where does the Bible come from?—From God. But how do Anglicans know this? We Catholics say we know it from the Church, which is one, visible, hierarchical, with Bishops and Pope, infallible and indefectible. But the Protestants have to find a different answer. And surely it is not easy.

Even could they prove—apart from the Church—that all the 66 or 73 books that make up the Bible are *authentic* and have been written by Moses, Isaias, Jeremias, and the rest, they would be no nearer the goal. Authenticity does not imply freedom from error, nor does truth imply inspiration. Besides, even admitting that Protestants can prove the Bible to be *inspired* how can they determine the *extent* of the inspiration? Are the sacred authors inspired by God in whatever they utter, even down to the last syllable? or are they inspired only in a general way? Are they inspired only in matters of faith and morals, or also in matters historical and scientific? If the Protestant Church profess that she cannot determine this, how can Protestants determine it? But leaving this aside, how do

Protestants know that the Bible which they read is the Bible of which God is the author? Have all the biblical books, even the most ancient, remained *uncorrupted* in all their different parts? Are there no *interpolations*? And are the *translations* reliable? How can a poor Protestant prove all this? And if he cannot, how can he say that his faith comes to him from the Bible? His sanctity is based on his faith, his faith on the Bible; and the Bible?... He does not know.

When Protestantism started the so called Reformation, the great complaint was the tyranny and corruption of Rome, of which men were to set themselves free by rejecting authority and appealing to the Bible and to the Bible alone. Formerly this was only one of the channels through which God spoke to men—at the Reformation it became the only channel. Formerly the Bible was given to men by the Church, who was its sole authoritative interpreter—then each one took the Bible into his own hands, and interpreted it after his own fashion. Formerly no one would have believed in the Bible, if the Bible did not come to him through the Church—then the Bible needed no Church to recommend it, it stood or fell by itself.

It was thought, of course, that man could continue to live a Christian life, for the Bible still supplied him with a supernatural Revelation. And in fact this continued to be the case for some time. The old Church had so accustomed men to see the word of God in the Bible that men still believed it was so. But the voice of the Church in Protestant countries grew fainter as the years went by. The men of the Bible began to doubt whether the Bible was the Word of God at all; and since no authoritative voice assured them that it was, they began to criticize the Bible, and to regard it more as a venerable Book on the same plane as the Vedas or the Koran. When you cut a branch from a tree, the branch does not wither immediately after. The sap, which the old trunk supplied, still courses through its cells; but it slowly dries up, and the branch is doomed to certain death.

Protestantism though cut off from the true Church has not yet run its course. While it asserts that its supernatural life is not logically based on the Church, nor perhaps on the Bible—it still maintains that it possesses supernatural life and that *Faith* is still its source. This, however, is not the faith that is engendered by teaching; it is not so much an intellectual or dogmatic assent, which presupposes the firm grasping of some truth, as a kind of confidence, an unshakable conviction that God loves us, and pardons our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"*Faith* is not mere belief in the *being* of a God, nor in the historical fact that Christ has come on earth, suffered and ascended. Nor is it the submission of the reason to mysteries, nor the sort of trust which is required for exercising the gift of miracles. Nor, again, is it the knowledge and acceptance of the sacred truths of the New Testament, even the Atonement, however accurate that knowledge, however implicit that acceptance. It is neither the faith of Judas who healed diseases, nor of Simon Magus who submitted to Baptism nor of Demas who might be orthodox in his creed, nor of devils who "believe and tremble." All such kinds of faith are put aside as fictitious, as not deserving the name, and having no connection whatever, except in the accident of an homonymous term with that faith which justifies.

"Such justifying faith or trust is supposed to be, considered negatively; when a more direct account of it is demanded, answer is made as follows: that it is a spiritual principle, altogether different from anything we have by nature, endowed with a divine life and efficacy, and producing a radical change in the soul; or more precisely, that it is a trust in Christ's merits and in them alone for salvation. That is regarded as that very feeling exercised towards our Almighty Benefactor, which we are on the contrary warned against when directed towards anything earthly as riches or an arm of flesh. It is the feeling under which we flee from any great temporal danger to some place or means of

refuge; and the feeling under which the servant in the parable asked forgiveness of his debts, with a simple admission that it lay solely and entirely with his lord to grant it. It consists then in a firm reliance on Christ's mercifulness towards even the worst of sinners who comes to him,—an experimental conviction that the Soul needs a Saviour and a full assurance that He can and will be such to it,—a thankful acceptance of His perfect work,—an exaltation and preference of Him above all things,—a surrender of the whole man to him,—a submission to his will,—a perception and approval of spiritual things,—a feeling of the desirableness of God's service,—a hatred of sin,—a confession of utter unworthiness,—a self-abhorrence of what is past,—and a resolution in dependence on God's grace, to do better in future. Some such description is often given of Faith; or, in a word, it is spoken of as being, or implying all at once, love, gratitude, devotion, belief, holiness, repentance, hope, dutifulness, and all other graces." (Newman: Lectures on Justification, pp. 6, 7).

THE RELATIVE POSITIONS OF CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS COMPARED

We allow that in individual cases such faith justifies; we even grant that the justification which it works is true and real. But what are its foundations?

A *Catholic* will find them in the Church, who is her own witness and who leads him straight to Jesus. She can give him full assurance that Jesus is his Saviour; she can help him "to prefer Jesus to all things," "to surrender the whole of himself to Jesus." Through her Sacraments and through her Priests she can excite in us "a feeling of the desirableness of God's service," "a hatred of sin," "a confession of utter unworthiness;" she can receive our confession, release us from our chains, bless our resolutions, and strengthen our purpose.

I said that the Church is "her own witness," and that is what makes the position of a Catholic so secure. For, though

it can be historically proved that Jesus Christ was God's own Messenger and Legate, nay, that He was very God, and that consequently whatever He did institute in virtue of this mission, is divine, though we can establish the fact that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ, and thereby satisfy our intellect that her claims are based on God, yet there is another, and more direct way, to arrive at the same conclusion. And that is by considering the *Church in herself*, as she stands before our eyes, and by examining "*the testimony which she gives of herself*." For, is not the *sanctity and inexhaustible fecundity* of the Church, a clear proof that she comes from Christ? Remember the conversions of sinners that daily take place at her shrines, her missions and retreats. Recall to mind the change of ideals, and the complete overturning of values, which she brought about in the Roman Empire, and which she is constantly bring about in the world around us.

Look at her *marvellous fecundity*, by which she has provided, and does provide even now for the spiritual needs of young and old, of hale and sick, of those on whom fortune smiles, and of those that are poor, abandoned, rejected by all. Cast a glance on the works of Don Bosco, of Blessed Cottolengo, of St. Vincent de Paul. See how she constantly generates new Orders and Congregations, adapted to different times and different necessities, where virtue—even heroic virtue—is constantly practised, and the Counsels of Christ are lived in a manner most simple and unaffected.

The charismata, and gift of miracles, that were such a prominent feature of the Apostolic Church, are not wanting in the Catholic Church of our own day. The chronicles of Lourdes, of Padua, of Caravaggio, and a hundred other places do testify to it; while the Processes of Beatification and Canonization, which are carried on at all times in Rome are unanswerable proof thereof.

The Unity of the Church of Rome, coupled with her adaptability, to all nations, and all times, is itself a veritable

miracle. This is all the more apparent, when we remember the threats and vehement oppositions such unity has met with throughout history, and does encounter even nowadays.

The obstacles to the fulfilment of Catholic Unity arise first from the sublimity and mysterious nature of the doctrines of the Church, against which love of independence, free thought, and the autonomy of reason, constantly rise up in arms. That such unity should be preserved inspite of the sophisms, and subtle arguments, which are daily served up by newspapers, magazines and books, written with all the charms of style and the glamour of Science, is wonderful indeed.

The very austerity, and uncompromising nature of the Church's moral code, ought to be another and formidable obstacle to her Unity. How three hundred millions of people, including so many of the most intellectual and cultured men of the day should agree to be guided in their most intimate relations, such as do exist between husband and wife, doctor and patient, servant and master, by the direction of the Church, whose authority they assume to be final in matters both of faith and morals, is a fact for which no natural reason can afford a sufficient explanation. Again, if one takes into account the diversity of races, of education, of political and social outlook, among the members of the Catholic Church; the difference of civilization, of language, and history, and the pride and mutual envy of the various nations are weighed, and their disruptive forces are appraised, the wonder increases that such a huge organism as the Church, should still keep together, and live, and prosper and spread with ever-renewed vigour. No doubt, the strong centralization of the Catholic System may be adduced as a partial explanation of this astounding fact; yet its monarchical character, and its uncompromising attitude, wherever a moral principle or dogma is at stake, do not make submission easier in these days of democracy and tentative thinking.

The very stability of the Church, amidst all the changes and vicissitudes of Kingdoms and Republics, of arts and sciences,

of social and philosophic experiments—a stability, which differs from the inertia of a mountain by its perpetual fruitfulness and ever-living adaptability, increases our wonder a hundredfold.

Unbelievers, heretics, bad Catholics, fight against the Church. No dogma, no moral principle, no Catholic institution, is left untouched. Now the war rages fiercest in Italy, now in France, or Germany, now in Mexico, Portugal or Austria; sometimes it is dark and insidious, sometimes open and violent. Now by lies and calumnies, now by sarcasm and derision the Church is repeatedly assailed. The arts and sciences, the Theatre, the Music Hall, the Cabinet of Politicians, the Newspaper Office, the taverns, the brothel . . . . all conspire against her.

Scandals, true or invented, seductions, cajoleries, dissensions, corruptions, all, like a raging ocean, dash their waves against her stronghold and her battlements. And, though in the Middle Ages, her answers were fierce, now her arms are chiefly patience, meekness, prayer and trust in God.

No Catholic need study Ancient History, nor worm himself into Archives and Libraries, nor interrogate the monuments of Antiquity, and discuss Codices and texts, in order to establish the claims of the Catholic Church, and assure himself of the genuineness of her credentials. "*Me attendite, dicit Ecclesia, me attendite, quam videtis, etiamsi videre nolitis.*" Look at me, examine me, study me—says the Church—"You excuse your incredulity by asserting that at the time of Jesus you were not yet born, that you have not witnessed his miracles. But fix your attention on me, think deeply on what takes place before your very eyes. These are not things of the past, nor are they prophecies of future days. They are facts which happen in your midst, and every day of your lives. Is it a small thing, is it of no account, that such a tremendous portion of humanity should believe in the Catholic Church, should worship the Crucified one?" And St. Augustine, whose words we have

merely translated, continues: "As the love of friends which cannot be seen, is believed through its external manifestations, so the Church which is seen now, is a proof of the things of the past, is a pledge of the reality of things to come." (*De Fide rerum quae non videntur—cc. IV, V etc.*).

Now, it is the formidable weight of this complex argument that usually brings about the conversions to the Catholic Church, of good and thoughtful men. It is its strength, almost instinctively felt and perceived, that steadies the faith of Catholics, and supplies them with an unshakable basis for their supernatural life. Many, alas! do fail to correspond. Yet the failure is not due to the Catholic Church, it is merely the result of their individual weakness and frailty.

Catholics may and do confidently repeat the words of the Poet, addressing the Church of God:

Haec est cymba qua *tuti* vehimur
Hoc ovile quo *tecti* condimur
Haec columna qua *firmi* nitimur
Veritatis.

This is the barque, in which we sail secure.
This is the fold, in which we are gathered and protected.
This is the pillar of truth, against which we can lean strongly and without fear.

But the position of a Protestant is altogether different.

As a child he *may* have been baptized, and thus have been inserted into the mystical Christ. He *may* then have received the germs of faith, hope and charity. When his reason first opened to light his latent faith *may* have blossomed into love. And this may have been fostered by his parents, who endeavoured to return him to God as pure as they had received him from God.

But, as the years pass, doubts assail him, and the answers of his parents do not suffice. He begins to exercise his right of

private judgment; he discriminates between truth and truth; this he accepts, that he rejects. He has been taught to regard Jesus as His Saviour—but what need has he of a Saviour? Jesus is his redeemer, but as he ever been a slave? He should prefer Jesus to all else—but is not Jesus too far away, is He not powerless against the witchery of life? He must surrender himself to Jesus—but what is Jesus more than a historical person? How does he know that Jesus is God? His parents tell him so. But why? Can his parents prove it to him? And what rights have they over his conscience? His pastor tells him so. But what is his pastor to him? What are his pastor's credentials? What is his pastor more than a *parson?* Is he a *Priest* at all?

Sensuality, pride, covetousness gradually get a hold over him. He loses "the perception and approval of spiritual things," he does not abhor sin, he does not even know what sin is. He mixes up social faults with spiritual failings, dutifulness with politeness, faith with opinions. Sometimes he feels inclined to think of God, but nobody helps him, nobody tells him what God is. He opens his Bible; but if one page is beautiful and inspiring the next seems childish and tedious: if here he finds wisdom and love and peace, there he is shocked by the cruelty, and the spirit of revenge, of some of the Bible-Heroes. He goes to Church, but one preacher destroys what the other is building, or the sermon is in contradiction with the creed. If he is worldly-minded he laughs at the hollowness of it all; if he has no thoughts of his own he follows the crowd; if he is shallow he is content to do what the others do—at least externally. But internally he has no faith in God, and perhaps little in himself; and his charity is either dead or dying. He has nothing to restore it, no certitude to build upon, no authority to have recourse to. He is a mere individual in the spiritual world, and who knows whether his voice is heard anywhere! There are no intermediaries between him and God—and how can he approach God at all?

There is no definite supernatural Law to guide him; and he cannot find out from the Bible what to do and what to leave undone. Perhaps the cares of life free him from these anxieties; he becomes a merchant, a soldier, a politician—but does he remain a Christian? He has been baptized, of course; but what else? He goes to Church once every seventh day, but what for?

Is his Religion the Religion that Christ has left us? Is it the Religion of the Cross? What is its value when set face to face with the grim realities of life? Perhaps it succeeds as a middle-class Religion, as a Religion of the bourgeois; but it will have no influence on the very learned, or on the dregs of society. It will do for the courting time; it will never make a solid foundation for a happy home. It will go on by inertia where the state and the customs of the people prop it up; it will never expand and multiply real conversions. It will perhaps suit a clerk at his desk; but will never be of any use to a soldier on the battlefield. It will be comfortable and cosy at evensong; but helpless and hopeless when the day closes, and man remains alone on his death-bed. Melancthon's mother saw this when she told her son that Protestantism was good enough to live in, but it was not "the thing" for one about to appear before the Judge. Many a Protestant Military Chaplain has realized the same thing during the Great War. What had he to give to a dying soldier? A word of consolation perhaps, and often not even that. No wonder then, the soldiers did not ask for him and often did not care for him. One needs something different from "adverbs and no verbs" at the hour of death.

As to the Catholic soldiers, Fr. Garrold, a Military Chaplain, writes: "They died with the faith of the Church in their hearts, and the prayers of the Church on their lips." And Fr. Peal, another Military Chaplain, says: "The Catholic soldier knows his Religion, values his faith, puts himself to great trouble to avail himself of the priest's service, and his first thought,

when wounded, is the Last Sacraments." And these bring him no empty words, but his Lord and his God.

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CHAPTER X

SOME OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE SANCTITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

(A)

MINOR OBJECTIONS

Though Protestantism has been started by men of no high virtue, and its influence on society has been far from beneficial; though at the present day it is a very Babel of confusion and doctrinal disorder, still there are not many who are ready to abandon it and join what they call "the Roman Catholic Denomination."

Some are held back by the force of custom and inertia. Others are indifferent, and slowly drift into the sea of Rationalism; or, eager for novel religious experiences, they join the ranks of Spiritualism, or embrace the weird tenets of Theosophy. Some again, feel a certain inclination towards Catholicism, they admit that quite a strong case can be made for it, but, even waiving wordly considerations such as the loss of one's position, or the breaking asunder of social and domestic ties, which are not without weight for the generality of mankind, they are kept back by misconceptions, prejudices and calumnies, which are preached from many a pulpit, and written by many an author against Catholicism.

To give only some examples: not a few are disgusted with Rome because she teaches the doctrine of Indulgences, which they simply regard as a cunning device to make money. A Catholic child could convince them of their error. Yet their prejudices are too strong for them and they seem incapable of perceiving the truth.

As to the Jesuitical maxim: "The end justifies the means," it has never been taught by any Jesuit, it is refuted in all their books on Moral Theology and Ethics, and still many non-Catholics continue to attribute it to the Jesuits and blame them for it. They are blind to the fact that almost all the world, with its sham virtue, or its unblushing vices, is built on it; that big business and godless politics believe it as the purest Gospel, and consistently act on it. That is not of great moment! What matters is that the Jesuits, so mellifluously pious, and so piously astute, have first propounded it, and have always held it as the guiding star of all their activities! How then could they join the Church of Rome, where the Jesuits are held in such high estimation, as to be called the very bodyguard of the Pope? How can they be members of a Religion that seems to wink at this most objectionable teaching, and to be unaware of the pernicious effects of such principles?

Not so very long ago, and perhaps even now, in some parts of America, England and Germany, it was commonly believed that Catholic Priests sold absolutions and licenses to sin! The Protestant Alliance finds still readers in plenty who swallow whatever it prints about the corruption of monks and nuns, and the disorders of monasteries and convents.

A Catholic does not know what to make of all this. If he lives in a Catholic country he finds it difficult to admit that Protestants are in good faith; and if his lot is cast among them, he cannot but wonder at their "gullibility."

After the War one does not hear so much of the backwardness and dishonesty of Catholic countries; better acquaintance with them, and a comparison with Protestant lands, has opened the eyes of many. However, it is still the Protestants who are patterns of honesty and fair play—at least in novels—inspite of broken treaties and repudiated conventions.

(B)

IRREVERENCE AND PROFANENESS

But let us leave this aside. It is not by these calumnies and misrepresentations that the most thoughtful among Protestants are deceived. Nor are they kept back from turning towards Catholicism by the idleness, the slovenliness, the disorder which one sometimes meets among Catholics. They have seen enough of the slums of their own cities to be shocked at the destitution, misery and vice, in the slums of Catholic towns. Besides, they know quite well that if some of the Catholic poor are lazy, dirty, and slovenly, they are usually happy, loving, and patient; and these virtues they would not possess without their Catholicism; whilst their miseries can be fully accounted for by heredity, education, environment and poverty.

It is rather the Catholic conception of Religion the way the Catholics look at things supernatural that repels a good many from Rome. They do not think that Catholicism is to blame because Catholic Nations are perhaps not so prosperous as Protestant Nations, or because there is ignorance and slovenliness among Catholics; the reproach of Catholicism—according to them—does not lie in these defects; it is not what it does not do, so much as what it does.

Its history, they contend, and a fair survey of the actual state of the countries where Catholicism is strongest, show that its teaching does produce a very definite character on individuals as well as on nations. This character seems best defined by the words "profaneness" and "irreverence" in things religious. These outsiders have noticed, or they think they have noticed, a shallow, hard, indelicate way among many Catholics, of speaking of the most sacred things, of alluding to the most awful mysteries, which, to say the least, is out of taste, and most offensive to a person of ordinary refinement. That some Catholics are given to lying, and stealing, and dishonesty, is

not a matter of great wonder for them. They know that human nature is not destroyed by Catholicism, and that such lapses are common wherever there are men. They quite realize that it would be pharisaical to say: In our community, or in our country, no such things do exist. They readily admit the truth of the old adage:

Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto!

Lying, stealing, impurity and the rest, are due to our weak and corrupt nature, not to Religion. But with the "irreverence" and "profaneness" above mentioned, the case appears to them altogether different. In fact, they argue, these defects seem to be the home-produce of Catholicism. Catholics, whether of the Middle Ages, or of our own times, whether of the North or of the South, of the East or of the West, are often rude where they should be delicate and reverent, they are loquacious where they should be silent, jocose where they should shudder and tremble. Listen to them glibly speaking of heaven and hell, laughing at the devil, and cracking jokes even at the expense of their Saints. Look at them when they go to Confession; they are usually in a hurry; they unscrupulously try to get in first; they hasten through their tale in a most matter-of-fact way, without shame, without sorrow, ready to come back after a few days, with the very same sins. They say they do believe in miracles, and yet they, as often as not, doubt them, and scoff at them. They mix up devotion with amusement. In their Churches they talk and laugh; and behold! at the tinkling of a bell, they bend their heads in adoration. Their pictures are often most devotional and beautiful; but not infrequently, and even in the same Church, they are almost shockingly immodest and alluring. At Salisbury they had their boy-Bishop, at Rheims their Lord of misrule. You never know whether it is Ash Wednesday or Shrove Tuesday with them. Chaucer, with his quaint humour, seems to have hit them off admirably in "The Wife of Bath," a mixture of roguery and commonsense, of

worldliness and devotion, of penance and sin. Can a populace be more devout than the Neapolitans? Yet they often rise in fury against the very Saints whom they so enthusiastically worship. Do these people believe at all in what they seem to adore? Here you have a peasant or a workman. He wears two or three medals round his neck, and he swears like a Turk. He is very careful to keep a light ever burning before an image of the Madonna, whilst the ribaldry and downright obscenity of his jokes and stories is hardly beaten by Boccaccio. Some Catholics are charming, refined, delightful, people. But they are the exception. On the whole Catholics are a jumble of dishonesty and devotion, of piety and superstition, of faith and unbelief, which to an honest mind is a veritable enigma.

Well, I suppose I have not diminished the strength of the objection by understating it, or by making use of such rhetorical devices as are familiar to many an Apologist, when he desires to score a point over his adversary. I confess that my desire is not to score a victory, but only to help and discover the truth. And surely anyone who has lived among Catholics and possesses first-hand information about them, will agree with me that the objection is based merely on superficial observations and strongly coloured caricatures of Catholic life. What may be true of some is applied to all, what has happened once is said to be happening always and everywhere; and the shades in the picture are made darker and more repulsive by quietly cutting off the light, which indeed is not wanting, but is on the contrary shining with calm brilliancy for those who have eyes to see it. Yet, in order to understand the point a little better—and not merely for the sake of argument—we may allow the charge to stand, at least partially, and we may admit that Catholics, chiefly where they are not mixed with Protestants, are often profane and irreverent.

But we may ask: Is this a consequence of the teaching of the Catholic Church, or solely a natural effect of the divine truth being revealed to the human mind, which is so feeble and ignorant?

Protestants, who feel the difficulty most keenly, do so because they base their reasoning on a wrong principle. They start from the idea that where there is faith there must be charity, obedience and reverence; so where they see disobedience, sin and irreverence, they think that faith also is lacking or that it is false and superstitious. According to Catholic Theology, faith and charity are quite distinct and separable; something like seeing and grasping. Faith is a spiritual sight of the unseen; charity is a loving conformity of one's actions with faith. A Protestant has lost this spiritual sight; yet, having kept the word, he has changed its old meaning, and has taken it to signify love and obedience. Hence, where he notices a lack of love, he immediately suspects a corresponding want of faith, or, at least, a wrong conception of things divine. According to Catholic teaching a man may know perfectly well that he should not yield to an impure temptation, and yet may deliberately commit a sin. So he may be gifted with a sure belief that our Lady is the Mother of God; and yet offend her most grievously with profane and blasphemous language. The sin—of course—is not a consequence of his knowledge, which is unclouded and serene; but it is a result of his wickedness or bad will, which has the upper hand, inspite of his knowledge.

How can that be—says the Protestant—unless faith and belief be entirely lacking, or utterly distorted and false?

No, it is not so. Faith is true and sincere, but charity is lacking, and it is precisely this inconsistency between supernatural knowledge and practice that constitutes the hideousness of sin. And Catholics know that sin is for them a tremendous reality made all the more horrible by the perceptions of faith. Hence we do not deny sin to exist among Catholics; we grant that many of us are but poor stuff. What we emphatically assert, however, is that, far from this being the home-produce of Catholicism, it is but the result of our frailty and weakness, of our poor minds coming into contact with the supernatural world through faith, and yet failing to realize its ideals through want of love.

And this is all the more noticeable in large and various masses of men. The powers that make for evil in every one of us, the *"lex peccati"* which inclines and draws every individual to sin, seems almost to be multiplied in a city or in a nation. Nature ever tends to irreligion and vice, even where it has been sanctified by Baptism, and strengthened by Confirmation. That does not alter the essence of the case; often nature has the better of grace, and we fall into a state of sin, that, in a sense, is worse even than sin among unbelievers.

Yet, inspite of the destruction wrought by sin, a germ of life remains within our soul, and that is the power or faculty of faith Now this point should be noted most carefully by those who may be inclined to set faith at a discount, or even to scorn it, as something utterly useless and inefficient. Even faith can sometimes be overpowered; but that is not common among Catholics. The Catholic who unfortunately falls into sin, has knowledge without love, perception of things unseen, and no affection for them. But the knowledge, which has been temporarily contradicted by a deliberate sin, will finally bear fruit. Lovingly tended by the Church, who waters it, and frees it from the choking thorns, and shelters it from the burning sun, the seed will gradually sprout, and give the leaves, the flowers and the fruits of deeds. That may be late in life; it may happen when temptations have lost their strength, when the fire of passion is all but dead. But then, when despair is about to engulf the poor sinner, the Church lovingly steps in; and, though often repulsed before, forgets the injuries she has received, and, full of love, endeavours to bring the sinner back to his Creator. For her, repentance never comes too late. She fosters it; she revives the confidence that is well nigh extinct; she bandages the wounds which sin has inflicted, and, like the good Samaritan, helps the poor sinner on to her beast of burden, and carries him back to the inn.

The answer, as given above, will account for sin existing among Catholics, inspite of their faith and of the vivid knowledge

they have of things supernatural. But it does not explain that peculiar irreverence and profaneness which, according to many a Protestant, is so marked a feature of Catholic lands.

True, I have insisted on the fact that all Catholics, even sinners, usually have faith; they are all gifted with this wonderful knowledge of things invisible, which brings them home to them as *facts* not as mere *suppositions*, as living realities, not as vague hypotheses and opinions. Now, if these facts are used well by the good, they are used wickedly and inconsistently by the wicked and the irreligious; and it is precisely this wicked and inconsistent use of holy and supernatural facts which constitutes the peculiar irreverence noticeable among Catholics. Such a wicked use is not prominent among Protestants, for their faith does not supply them with facts, but merely with opinions; and opinions are usually held in private, not paraded on the streets; they are jealously guarded, as especially our own; things that others need not share, but must respect. Sometimes they peep out, duly strengthened and supported by appropriate texts and quotations; yet no one really gets angry with them, for, after all, they can be discarded. No one will dream of cursing, and blaspheming against them, for private opinions do not irritate those who hold them. A shadow does not make us angry, for it lacks vitality; it is a man, with his stubbornness, or an unyielding fact, that irritates us and urges us on to rebellion. Or, if we are wiser, we do not rebel, but we try other ways of overcoming the man that thwarts us, or of turning round the fact, and thus finally have our will. But let us illustrate all this with some examples.

A man sins grossly. If he is a Protestant he is irritated with those who threaten him with hell; for hell is but an opinion to him; and no one has a right to frighten him with mere opinions. If he is a Catholic, he believes in hell; he is sure that hell exists; he is angry with God that has made it; perhaps he utters curses and imprecations. But, then, gradually anger dies

out, and he begins to devise means of escaping punishment, though he has no strength to change his ways. Thus hope will get stronger and stronger, the more so that, as sin does not destroy faith, so it leaves also the faculty of hope unimpaired. Still the problem remains, how to escape hell, and at the same time continue a life of sin. Well, the Catholic, of course the bad and wicked Catholic who does not want to give up his iniquities and his crimes—the Catholic remembers some other facts which his faith guarantees and makès him sure of. He knows the great mercy and goodness of Our Lady; and so he decides to wear her scapular, or medal, or he orders a feast to be celebrated in her honour, hoping all the while that she will finally help him. Or again, he knows that God is merciful to the almsgiver, and though he does not renounce sin, he hopes, through his alms, to win God's pardon.

"How utterly profane and irreverent!"—say the critics—"thus to coax God to be a party, as it were, to our sins!" Yet it is not Catholicism that is at fault; it is merely a weak and bad man, that abuses of its doctrines, and uses ill the facts, which his faith reveals to him.

But let us examine more in detail whether this poor wicked Catholic is at such a disadvantage when compared with a bad Protestant or an unbeliever. Surely he is not. For, though his sin may be more grievous than theirs on account of his clearer knowledge; yet his prospects of conversion and sincere return to God are much greater. And this, not only on account of the Church's constant endeavour to make him change his evil ways, but precisely because his faith is not extinct.

First of all faith keeps ever telling him that his actions are sinful; and the mere knowledge of the sinfulness of a particular action will, in the long run, be a help to relinquish it. For the Protestant, on the contrary, the light of faith, if it has ever been shining at all, will soon be extinguished and overwhelmed by the ashes of sin. And, together with faith, the Protestant is

likely to lose his knowledge of sin also. At first, conscience will warn him; but how feeble and uncertain is the voice of conscience! How easy it is to twist it and to distort it! The doubts, by and by, are merged into arguments, the arguments into reasons, the reasons into apparent certainty.

Let us take an example. Suppose that a poor Protestant has fallen into the meshes of a divorced woman. "Is this a sin at all?"—he begins by asking himself. The doubt, weak at first and almost ashamed, gains strength; and since a Protestant's birthright is the unchecked exercise of private judgment, he endeavours to find excuses for his actions. "Do not the laws of the land," he says, "permit me to marry and live with a divorced woman? Is it not honourable to live with the woman I love? Is not love a sufficient justification for my action?" and so forth. Or again, he manages to change the meaning of words; or he coins new ones the better to hide his delinquencies. What our forefathers honestly called "fornication" he styles "companionate marriage;" abortion and such like abominations go by the name of "birth control." And thus the very idea of sin is insensibly obliterated, and the man willingly lets it drop from his soul, as a relic of the Middle Ages, scarcely to be tolerated in modern times.

A Catholic, on the other hand, may be as weak as a Protestant. He too may yield to temptation; yet he knows it is a sin; and though he may attempt to justify his action, since his faith is usually not lost, he is not likely to succeed. Since he lives in the world, and takes part in the conversation of men, and reads the papers and magazines, even his faith may at times become clouded. Yet the case is rarely desperate. The warnings of the Church still reach him; and these are not uncertain and wavering; they are clear, insistent and strong. And he believes in the Church; he knows she is "the column of truth;" the new words, the fashionable expressions, do not deceive him; in his heart of hearts he still calls a spade a spade, and for him *the knowledge of evil is the beginning of salvation.*

But there is a second point to be emphasized in this connection. The Protestant sneers at the poor Catholic sinner who still wears a scapular, or piously invokes Our Lady, when he rises in the morning, or when he hears the Angelus bell ring. Yet, is not this very fact, that the Catholic still honours the Blessed Virgin, perhaps with a faint regret that the innocence of his early years is gone, or with a weak desire to be helped, not now exactly, but later on, when he is sick or old.... is not this fact, a kind of évidence that his attachment to sin is not so deep as to make him careless of God altogether, and altogether insensible to the powerful attraction of virtue? "This," you will say, "is mere cowardice or disguised selfishness." —Well, I do not say that the poor man is a hero. Yet the fear of God is not cowardice, but a gift of the Holy Ghost, and the desire of salvation is not selfishness, but is based on a disposition of God Himself, who desires the salvation of all men.

In the third place, the timid prayer, or the giving of alms to win God's pardon, though repentance be actually absent, is not an attempt on the part of the sinner to make God a party to his sins, but is a remote disposition to conversion, which may indeed win God's mercy, and bring about a sincere detestation of sin.

"But," our critics continue, "here is another sinner, with some semblance of piety and religiosity; in point of fact, however, he is weak, and has never learnt to curb his passions. Whilst he yields to temptation, he piously regrets it; but he comforts himself with the thought of the coming Confession, when everything will be pardoned, and he will turn over a new leaf. But he has scarcely left the Confessional, that he falls again; and again he plans a new Confession; so that he is like a shuttle-cock, moving perpetually from sin to Confession and from Confession to sin. The disastrous effect of a system, in which such things are possible, on the development of character, is

apparent. Men will be turned out lacking in moral fibre; mean and deceitful hypocrites, who juggle with their own convictions, and try to gamble on the Mercy of God, made ridiculously cheap by a system of mechanical absolutions, and a magical wiping off of every sin and guilt."

Yet is this the real state of affairs, or is it merely a caricature of what is actually taking place? For one who miserably abuses God's Mercy in the manner described above, are there not thousands, who in the Sacrament of Confession find consolation, help and strength? who own that whatever character and moral backbone they possess, they owe it to that Sacrament, where grace was given to them, and prudent advice and moral support? Here also it is not Catholicism that is at fault, it is not that most human of Christian Sacraments—Penance—which, as its name implies, must be approached with sorrow and regret for past sins and with sincere desire of amendment, that is to blame. It is merely a weak will and a bad character, which abuses of the very medicine, that brings health to all.

However, one may ask, which is better, either this miserable profanation of God's Mercy, this shocking irreverence on the part of a man who endeavours to find an encouragement to sin in the very means which God has placed at our disposal in order to help us to rise again, but who, however, does not slam the door in God's face, but allows Him still, so to say, a ray of hope to be able finally to enter in and save a poor soul; or the cold and despairing unbelief, which is certainly not profane, but cuts all the bonds which tie humanity to its Creator, and precludes all possibility for grace to clothe us again, to bathe us anew in the vivifying streams of Christ's own Blood?

We may be further allowed to remark that what is most offensive in these exaggerated criticisms and objections, is not only their one sidedness, or the incapacity of those who frame them, to look at the brighter side of things, but also their

unconscious air of superiority, their implicit belief that they "are not like other men." Yet, waiving this point, is it not a fact that the very eagerness evinced by the poor weakling mentioned above, to go to Confession, shows that, after all, he does not want to lose God's grace altogether, he still prizes it, he still cares for it? And are his failings so typically Catholic as never to be met with among non-Catholics? Has never a Protestant young man done something wrong, hoping all the while to be forgiven by his parents, who—he knows—are doting on him? The poor wretch is to be blamed, no doubt. But who will deny that his miserable attitude is human, and intensely so?

Further, the fact must be borne in mind that the critics here seem to ignore altogether the function of the Confessor in the administration of the Sacrament. They seem to forget that he represents Christ our Lord, and that he endeavours to imitate his Master in the triple office of Pastor, of Teacher, and of Physician. As *Pastor*, he has the authority to forgive. As *Teacher*, he is obliged to instruct his penitent, if he notices that the latter's knowledge both of Christian doctrine and Christian morality is utterly insufficient. As *Physician*, he must study the dispositions of the penitent, in order to give him the advice he needs, to point out to him the course he has to take, and to make sure that absolution will be a help to him and not a poison. This would plainly be the case if the penitent showed he is not sorry for his past sins, and is not actually determined to avoid them in future. The Confessor must ever be mindful of his model Jesus Christ, of whom it was said indeed that "the fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire," (Matt. III, 12), but He was also described by the Prophet in the touching passage: "Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul hath been well pleased. I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not contend, nor cry out, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. *The*

bruised reed he shall not break; and the smoking flax he shall not extinguish : till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name the Gentiles shall hope." (Is. XLII, 1).

But the description of the sinfulness and profanity of Catholics is not over. "Listen"—say our critics—"Listen to the conversation of a Catholic populace. What strange and horrible blasphemies mingle with it! Sometimes they are a mere profanation, like "God's eyes," and "Christ's Blood;" but oftener they are awful comparisons, senseless jests, obscene insults. Nothing in any way similar to it do we hear from Protestant navvies, or even from the heathen and savage dwellers of slumdom. One can hardly resist the conclusion that Catholicism, by attempting to create a lively faith in supernatural realities merely succeeds in breeding that contempt for them, which is a natural consequence of intimate familiarity among blackguards."

Here again, the apparent strength of the argument is all in its unblushing generalization. What is true of three or four in a thousand, is applied to all; what happens at times, is described as happening every day and every hour. But we can answer even more directly by remarking that it is certainly a great thing that Catholicism—as it is admitted—should succeed in creating familiarity between man and God, between us so lowly and miserable, and God's own Angels and Saints. For familiarity with good and spiritual things is usually fruitful of goodness and spirituality. It generates love and veneration for God, it manifests itself in a spirit of prayer and lively faith, by which the whole world assumes a kind of sacramental character, and every happening and event in our lives becomes a manifestation of God's Holy Will. And any one who knows Catholic life, who has penetrated beneath the surface, can testify to this undercurrent of spirituality, to this deep spirit of faith permeating the lives of Catholics, giving them consolation in sorrow, hope and comfort in the midst of trials, sweet trust

in God, even at the loss of fortune and of life. Yet in a few it has the contrary effect. The very familiarity with which they live with God and His Saints, makes the divine realities uppermost in their minds, which being rude and often obscene, and being also less educated, and sometimes impulsive and childish, easily associate God and the Saints with expressions of anger, disrespect and even obscenity. The shocking association is often semi-conscious and instinctive rather than malicious. It is due to a mixture of familiarity and passion, rather than to deliberate contempt. Often, far from being the result of a faulty creed, it is due to a faulty Philosophy, which, neglecting the activities of secondary causes, directly attributes to God misfortunes and untoward happenings, and easily manifests displeasure with angry words and expressions. As remarked above, Protestants regard a creed more as a matter of opinion than of certainty, more as a foreshadowing of debateable realities than the manifestation and revelation of a world invisible, but more real than the present. Consequently, Religion for them is shadowy and vague; a matter more of sentiment than of reason; a thing to be kept hidden in one's heart; something private, not social; something intensely individualistic, to which any show of publicity is repugnant. They do come out with it every seventh day; but then it is always dressed in its Sunday best, very respectable, and solemn, and self-conscious. But for Catholics, and chiefly for poor Catholics, Religion is very real indeed; their creed is rich and full of life. It likes the light of the sun; it thrives in feasts and processions; it mingles with all the concerns of life; it accompanies man from his birth even to his death; it watches him growing, it encourages him in his first fights against the devil, it blesses his simple joys: his marriage, the birth of his children, his houses, his harvests, his bed of sickness, his grave. For thousands this makes all their lives supernatural, full of faith and trust in God; it fulfils the word of the Apostle: "*Vestra conversatio in coelis est.*" But for others, it tends to make them profane; it lends itself to that kind of contempt for

things divine, which familiarity and coarseness most easily generate. It is to be noticed, however, that what a Protestant would utterly condemn as very irreverent, a Catholic would more reasonably regard with greater toleration. For he knows the influence of habit and routine, he makes allowance for the exuberance of nature, and does not ignore the difference between mere want of education and want of faith and love. I shall here give an instance that well illustrates my meaning. Any one who knows the Italian peasant will testify that he is a thorough gentleman. I do not make odious comparisons; I simply state a fact. Yet, suppose this gentleman is annoyed by his naughty child. Notice that I do not say that he is thoroughly roused, or that he is in a towering rage. No; he is just annoyed. Naturally, you will not be surprised if you hear him call his son a rascal. Well, he does so; but if you analyse the expression (=*filius canis*) that is most common in some parts of Italy, you will see that it is far more injurious to the father than to the child. Yet the man seems to be quite unconscious of what he is saying, not because he ignores the meaning of the words; that is quite clear to him; but because actual circumstances draw his attention from himself to the child; he wants to manifest his displeasure, and the words which he uses are quite strong enough; though no one but a foreigner will say that he misses the mark and makes a fool of himself. Now apply this to the swearing habit, and you will understand how the words may be rough, though the heart is gentle, and the expression may be impious, though the internal faith is pure and warm. And that it is so will be apparent to you if you try to point out to the gentleman how unbecoming and shocking is his behaviour. He will readily admit it; he will even thank you for your kindness; he will be sorry for what he has done; though, perhaps, later on, he will forget again, and again be carried away by his impulsiveness and want of reflection.

This attempt at refuting a very common charge will have—we trust—its weight with all fair-minded men. Yet we confess

that it is only the intimate knowledge of Catholics and of things Catholic, resulting from prolonged social intercourse, that will be capable of dispelling traditional prejudices, and of breaking up unreasoning frames of mind. Such intimate knowledge is certainly not gathered by tourists and such like, who visit a country in the same spirit in which they go to the movies and obtain a correspondingly correct insight into the ethos of a people. But, for the majority, direct knowledge, based on personal experience, being impossible, they may yet reach a fair appreciation of Catholic life by the reading of such works of Art as have arrested the attention of mankind on account of their true portrayal of characters, right estimation of historical epochs, and accurate psychology. One such is eminently "*The Betrothed*" of Alessandro Manzoni. He deals there with one of the most unfortunate episodes of Italian history; but such is the beauty and perfection of his style, the harmony which he has achieved between the various requirements of historical accuracy and Art, the serenity of his love for all men, and the sublimity of his moral and spiritual ideals, that he has won the undying admiration of Italy, and has had his work translated into some twelve or fifteen European languages.

Now, in the "*Betrothed*" the defects to be met with in Catholic Society are not glossed over. There we have the weak and timid Priest, the rebellious nun, the unscrupulous nobleman, the superstitious philosopher, the excitable crowd; and we have also the saintly Archbishop, the fearless friar, the pure and modest peasant girl. And the adventures are woven together with such delicacy of touch, and such unerring sense of perspective, as to produce a pleasing sense of harmony and fitness. The whole is permeated with the most fragrant Christian spirit; the influence of Religion, never obstrusive and irritating, is set forth in all its deep strength, mingled with such peace, transparency and equipoise, as never to tire or weary the reader, or give him that sense of artificiality and exaggeration, which often mars the effect of many a work of Art. The difference

between Manzoni's "*Betrothed*" and even the best stories of Dickens and Thackeray, or the Chronicles of Antony Trollope, need not be elaborated here. What, however, we may be allowed to remark is that such difference is not explained merely by the colour of the sky of England and Italy, or by the various literary attainments of the Authors, or by the diverse requirements of their respective novels. There is something deeper, and more subtle, which can hardly be described, but must be felt—something like a difference of atmosphere, of perspective, of appreciation of the values of life, which has its final explanation in the diverse temper of Catholicism and of Protestantism.

(C)

ANTICLERICALISM

So far we have dealt with one particular class of objections and difficulties, which outsiders, and chiefly Protestants, urge against Catholic Sanctity. But there exists another category of objections which run in a different channel. "Can the Roman Catholic Church be holy?"—some people ask, who are shocked by what they call her domineering attitude, which makes her little short of despotic and tyrannical, wherever she has a chance. Of course, she is all meekness, and prudence, and delicacy, in countries like England or Prussia, where she is a minority. In such countries she is always on her best behaviour; but she appears in her true colours, proud and overbearing, wherever she is uppermost, as in Spain, in Italy, in South America. Hence that virulent hatred against the Church, and against her Priests, which one notices in Catholic countries, and which is almost entirely absent in England, Germany, Denmark, and other Protestant lands. This hatred tends only to increase the prejudices and traditional dislike for Rome which many feel in their hearts. "See,"—they say—"how those who know Rome best, mistrust her!" And, unaware of the changes which have taken place within the last ten or fifteen years in many a European

country, they recount the persecutions against the Church, and the hatred with which she is regarded by the *Anticlericals* of Europe. There is no *Anticlericalism* in England, or in America; but wherever the Church dominates, there you have this strange phenomenon; a band of men, apparently honourable and conscientious, men of means and position, who make it the business of their lives to speak and write against the Church, to thwart her Priests, to hamper her activities, to banish her Religious Orders. Why? Surely because they recognize in the Church the enemy of progress, of enlightenment, of science, of humanity!

Protestants do not realize this, because the Catholic Church among them is poor, wields no great influence, has but scanty followers. And so they leave her alone, more in a spirit of contempt, than of generosity. As to their own religious establishments; why! they are but a department of their Governments, a purely national institution, which shares the ideals of the people, understands the activities of the nobility, and contributes its share to the development of the national spirit, in harmony with the Ministry for Education, almost on a par with the Army and the Navy, in friendly co-operation with the Home Secretary, in dutiful submission to the Prime Minister.

But why is it that the Catholic Church has ever excited the suspicions of Governments in her own lands? Is it really by her pride and lust of dominion, as outsiders would have it, or rather by her claims to universality and supernationality, by her unflinching fight against anyone who attempts to fetter her freedom, or curb her spiritual function in the world? This dilemma must be faced in all fairness; and the answer, for all those who have studied the Church of Rome in her origin and in her development, in her principles and in the conclusions which she has ever drawn from them, in the prophecies of her Divine Founder and in their striking fulfilment, cannot be but one.

Secular Governments in Catholic countries are often at war with the Church, because they know that the Church wants

perfect freedom in her spiritual sphere, and will ever protest against any attempt to make her a merely national institution, or a mere tool in the hands of a national Government. When they compare her with the various Religious Bodies in the world, and they see how meekly the latter submit to the civil Rulers, and in practice do admit the supreme authority of the State in matters both civil and moral, both temporal and spiritual, whilst the Church fearlessly repeats with her Founder: "Thou shalt give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's," they chafe and fret and endeavour to curb her intolerable pretensions. It has everywhere been so, from the banks of the Bosphorus to those of the Thames, from Frederick Red Beard to Louis XIV, from Philip II to Joseph of Austria, and down to our own times, from Bismarck in Germany to Crispi in Italy and Calles in Mexico.

Politicians usually hate the Church, wherever she is powerful, not because they fear her dark intents and purposes, but because they know her as the greatest enemy of Machiavellism, Opportunism, and Chauvinism, as one who insists on the rights of justice, who proclaims the imposture and evil purposes of those who set up a double code of morality, one for the individual, the other for the State, who denounces the pernicious error of those for whom the State is absolute, unchecked by any higher authority, dominated by no code besides its own. While, then, some deluded Protestants find an argument against the Church of Rome in the fierce Anticlericalism existing in Catholic countries, they do not see that this is a glory for Rome, and not a reproach.

Again, if besides the Politicians, we find so called Scientists and Educationists often swelling the ranks of Anticlericals, it is mainly because they know that only Rome can effectively withstand their monistic or materialistic tendencies, and their attempts to impart a "neutral" or godless education to the young. Catholic Bishops and Catholic Prelates of the type

of Barnes and Inge, who flirt with the pompous hierophants of Modern Science, are simply inconceivable, not because they lack the brains, but because they lack the suppleness and the anxious opportunism of these self-advertising Churchmen.

Yet there are two other reasons that account for this antagonism, which, however, is not so widely spread as some may think, nor can it point to the brightest luminaries of Science as its leaders and supporters. The first reason is the logical constitution of the Latin mind, which instinctively hates all compromise and faint-hearted half measures. Suppose an Anglo-Saxon comes, somehow, to be persuaded that Christianity is based on a gigantic fraud, and thrives on ignorance and superstition. He will probably be distressed and bewildered at first; for, many a pleasant association will now be broken or modified, and old habits of thought will be upset. But gradually he will adapt himself to the new situation; he will say: "Even if Christianity is based on falsehood, its influence, on the whole, has been beneficial. Our Art and Poetry have derived from it their best inspiration; many still find in it comfort and consolation. So why reject it? Why fight against it? It is a beautiful and venerable institution—not divine, to be sure, but human; and consequently it is part of ourselves, as dear to us as the dreams of our youth, as sacred as the Constitution of our land."

But now imagine a Latin to reach the same conclusion as to the nature of Christianity. At first he too will be distressed, and will suffer. Yet he is not likely to shape his conduct according to the sentimental reasons of the Anglo-Saxon, and settle down into a comfortable attitude of tolerance and superiorly benevolent "*Laissez faire*." If Christianity, and especially Catholicism, is false, why, we must get rid of it; and the sooner, the better. Never mind the glories of the past. If they are real, they are surely not due to a lie. The consolations which some people say they derive from their Religion, are but fatal narcotics, which poison their system, and sap their vitality. Catholicism is false;

hence we must destroy it. "*Ecrasez l'Infame.*" That is manly, for it is logical; that is noble, for it is born of truth.

The second reason which accounts, in a certain measure, for the Anticlericalism chiefly of Scientists and Educationists, is this, that they are annoyed by the frequent hesitation of the Church to accept their theories and hypotheses, by her temporizing attitude before what they consider the glorious conquests of Modern Science. But why is it that, whilst they are always experimenting and trying what is new and alluring, the attitude of the Church is indifferent, and not infrequently hostile? The reason seems to be this. It matters little to Scientists if their theories upset the belief of many, and thus endanger their salvation. They are as ready to drop a hypothesis, or to modify it beyond recognition, when it is found to be false, or merely out of fashion, as they were to frame it. But the Church is not reckless; she is not gambling with truth. She knows the infinite value of the human soul; and rather than to lose a single one, she is glad to wait a little longer for the full light of real scientific discovery. After all it is of little consequence whether the Earth goes round the Sun, or the Sun round the Earth; but it matters a great deal whether a man will reach his last end, or will miss it. Hence the Church is never in a hurry. She is never carried away by the glamour of novelty, or the bewitching intuitions of genius. If the truth is solidly established, she welcomes it; but why embrace what is doubtful? why commit herself to what is named Modern Science, but is only too often a fickle and deceptive mirage?

Again, many would-be social Reformers are Anticlerical on account of the fierce resistance the Catholic Clergy is everywhere putting up against their attacks on private property, on the sacredness of marriage, on the purity and self-sacrificing spirit in which married life must be lived, on the personal rights of the weak and the feeble-minded.

Artists are sometimes embittered against the Church because she has ever rejected the claims of Art to be a-moral, and the

inanities of those who proclaim the dogma *"Art for Art's sake."*

Bankers and wealthy merchants, and organisers of Trusts and Corners have little sympathy for Rome, because Rome strenuously defends the rights of the workmen, and fearlessly condemns all Economics and Big Business divorced from Morality and from the Law of the Gospel.

Thus, all those who study the phenomenon of Anticlericalism, which is indeed peculiar to Catholic countries, must find in it, rather than an argument of suspicion and reproach, a reason to honour the Church all the more; for by such hatred and persecutions her similarity with her Divine Founder is enhanced, who "was set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted." (Luke, II, 34).

(D)

HISTORICAL OBJECTIONS

The difficulties against Catholic Sanctity with which I have dealt so far, either arise from the exuberant vitality of the Catholic creed and from the intensity of Catholic life, which in the wicked assumes some peculiarly objectionable characteristics, or from the fierceness of the battle in which the Church is engaged wherever she is strongest, and wherever she makes her influence felt in Politics, Social Reform, Education, and in other activities of the human mind. These difficulties, however, are felt in a special manner by outsiders, they are a stumbling block for many a Protestant, who confesses to a certain degree of interest in things Catholic. They are hardly realized as such by the Catholics themselves. These, however, may be affected by the consideration of different facts in the long life of the Church of Rome, which, like a huge social organism, has assimilated unto itself existing institutions, and has influenced Society to an extent unparalleled in the history of Religions. But has it

always been for the good? We unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative, and we think that a short study of even the historical diseases of the Church of Rome will confirm our statement. These are the diseases rather of Society than of the Church; though they attack the Church also. In thinking of them we are reminded of the immortal creation of the Laocoon. The father, with his two children, is attacked by two gigantic snakes. He struggles to free himself from their coils, which are killing the two boys, and which threaten to destroy him. His muscles are rigid, his veins swollen, his mouth open, and the whole face is contracted by pain. Will he win or fall? . . . The marble leaves you uncertain and anxious. But Virgil tells you the end, and you grow sad at the tragic consummation. Did the Church also succumb, choked by the coils of evil? History will answer.

Here we shall briefly study two episodes, the first of which is the Pontificate of Gregory VII.

He reigned from 1073 to 1085, but his influence in the Church was felt long before, because he was the councillor of several Popes. Terrible evils existed then in Christendom. The Emperor Henry IV was dissolute, cruel, deceitful. Philip of France was surrounded by mistresses, and cynically trafficking in ecclesiastical preferments. William the Conqueror was oppressing the poor. Spain was threatened by the Moslems; the Romans, the Lombards and the Normans were "worse than the Jews and the Pagans," as Gregory himself writes. The Clergy "would rather forego their livings than their wives." The Bishops—miserable creatures of Kings and Emperors—were "gorged with plunder and open law-breakers." Gregory writes to his friend Hugh of Cluny: "An immense sorrow, sadness without a break, encompasses me round about"; and he cries to God: "Lord, take me away from this world; make me no longer delay!" The visible Sanctity of the Church had almost disappeared; ignorance, sensuality, violence, cruelty, lawlessness, everywhere. Some travellers now decry the Church of Rome

because they meet a deceitful Lazzarone, or see an old hag kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, and quietly stealing a handkerchief. But then it was "hard to find in the Eternal City a priest that was neither illiterate, nor simoniacal, nor living in disorder," and Gregory himself thought "that the Barque of Peter was well nigh ship-wrecked." He believed that the times had never been worse since the days of the Blessed Pope Sylvester I, when the Church was freed; and the barbarity which he beheld in all countries caused him to see Antichrist everywhere. His sorrows at the sight of the world's misery were so great that, adopting the words of the Prophet, he declared that "every hour he suffered the pains of a woman in labour."

The phrase was prophetic. For the Church was, as it were, in labour to bring forth a new society. The Policy of Gregory was "to reform the Church, cleanse and renew the corrupt Hierarchy, set it free from the bondage to Kings and Nobles." But what were his resources? Human resources he had none. But "he felt unbounded confidence in the "*Divine Idea*" of Church and Hierarchy, of monks, vows and religious profession, which from youth up he had cherished," And the Church and the monks helped him. By the Church here we mean the people, who, down to the very populace of Rome, were loyal to him; and by the monks we mean not only the famous Cluny, but practically all the Monasteries of Christendom, from which "hardly one can be cited which adhered to the cause of the Emperor, simony and clerical concubinage." Among them Gregory chose his Legates, whom he sent throughout Europe, and through whom he carried out his reforms. He drafted them, and they saw that they were executed. He gave orders, and they gathered councils, condemned Bishops, suspended Priests. And he himself wrote, beseeched, threatened, excommunicated, deposed. The Emperor came to Canossa, and for three days waited in the cold to obtain pardon from Gregory. He obtained it, but then he betrayed the Pope. The latter had to flee; Rome was burned, and the indomitable Gregory died at Salerno with

the words on his lips: "I loved justice, I hated iniquity, and therefore I die in exile."

Everything seemed to be lost; the Pope seemed to have been defeated; still it is from the time of his death that we notice a renewal of spirit, worked out by the immanent Sanctity of the Church. We cannot enter into details. Let us merely remark that from Gregory dates the almost universal observance of the *Law of Celibacy*, which saved the Clergy from becoming a hereditary Caste, secured to the Priests the confidence of the people, and fitted them better for their sublime vocation. Not even ten years after his death the voice of Peter the Hermit stirred Europe to fight for the liberation of the Holy Land, and the *Crusades* were started, which, though derided by a materialistic age, are a triumph of faith and chivalry. The *freedom* of Prelates and Bishops from a condition that would soon have made them "lose their sacred character and degraded them into lieutenants of an earthly king," that freedom for which Gregory had fought so valiantly, was secured. The *monastic idea*, which embodies what is highest in human aspirations, developed into a luxuriant growth, hardly equalled before or after. (Cfr. Mann. *The Lives of the Popes in the Middle Ages;* Vol. II, and Barry, *The Papal Monarchy*).

The second episode is the Pontificate of Alexander VI and the years that follow up to the Council of Trent (1492-1545). Ludwig Pastor—the great historian of the Popes—thinks that the Borgia Pontificate was a calamity for the Church. The Papacy was then degraded "to a mere Italian Princedom," and its sacred prerogatives were employed as "reasons of state," with scandal to present and after ages. "Calumny more atrocious than was practised by pamphleteers, ambassadors, diarists, biographers and literary men at large during the humanist era, it is impossible to imagine," and therefore the historian must proceed with caution; still the real evils, sometimes grossly exaggerated, sometimes distorted or caricatured, were appalling. The method of governing was a mixture of Nepotism and Machia-

vellism. Treachery and murder were rife everywhere. "The eminence of the Papacy consisted at that time in its leadership of Europe in the province of Art," a miserable eminence, if one thinks of its origin and of its ends. The doctrine of the Church was either neglected or despised. The authority of the Pope was weakened, the Clergy was worldly, the people frivolous. "Pleasure, pleasure, and nothing but pleasure" was the ideal. Continence, some described as a crime, and mortification as madness. Nature was substituted to God and Plato to Christ. This period may be fitly compared to a beautiful tomb, richly adorned with marble and gold. But under the marble there was a corpse in complete putrefaction.

The peoples themselves grew disgusted and wanted a Reform at any cost. But how can you expect a Reform from an adulterous Pope, the father of murderers and thieves; or from bastard Bishops and crafty or frivolous Cardinals? In Florence rose a man inspired by God to denounce the evils of the Church. He fasted and scourged himself to atone for the sins of the people. He thundered God's anathemas and preached apocalyptic visions. The city was turned into a monastery, and Savonarola could proclaim Jesus the King of Florence. But he was entangled in political schemes, disobeyed authority, and was executed when not yet fifty years of age. In Germany another Reformer came to condemn the Papacy and to preach a new Evangel. But pride was his moving spirit; calumny, coarseness and invective, his arms; and schism and heresy his end. And Germany gradually fell away from Rome, and then Denmark, Norway, Sweden and other countries. Another so-called Reformation was started in England. What occasioned it was the sensuality of the King; his covetousness of the wealth of churches and monasteries favoured it; cunning and brute force consummated it.

Surely not by such means could the Church be renovated, and her visible Sanctity be made splendid and universal once more. For, though no mention has been made of it in the

above picture, the *substantial Sanctity* of the Church still existed. The Sacraments were still administered, the Blood of Christ still coursed through the veins of the Church. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was even then offered up to God as a propitiation for our sins. In spite of evils and sins of every kind faith still remained, ever reproaching, ever inviting to a better life, often failing, but more often succeeding, if not for a long time, at least for some time, if not in the bloom of health, at least on the death-bed. Though often unworthy, the Priests still retained the power of reconciliation, and could still pronounce the words of absolution.

Besides this, the *visible Sanctity* of the Church also had not entirely disappeared, and we find its signs everywhere. Preachers like John of Barletta in Italy and Geiler of Kaisersberg in Germany, popularise the Word of God, inveigh against the evils of the day and call the people to penance, The art of printing is just being discovered, and the Bible is the first book to be printed. Columbus sets out to find a New World, in order, as he said, to bring new nations into the Kingdom of Christ. Da Vinci, Raphael and Michael Angelo express their faith and their devotion in exquisite Madonnas and inspired representations of the mysteries of our Religion. The study of the Greek language, which is then flourishing, is turned to account as of incalculable help to a right understanding of the inspired word. Magnificent Churches are erected to honour God and his Saints. Hospitals and charitable institutions are richly endowed for the support of the poor and the care of the sick. Rich ladies forget their frivolity to serve the poor of Christ; and gallant youths visit the prisons and bury the dead. Missionaries, like Las Casas and Martin de Valentia, undertake perilous journeys to evangelize the New World and convert it to the Catholic Church. And Rome, in spite of her frivolity and corruption, is still keeping the faith pure, is still condemning impious or obscene works like those of Pomponazzi and the Panormita; is still anxious about Divine Worship and the salvation of souls. After having been plundered

by the imperial troops she shows signs of real improvement. She condemns Luther, and she stands up for the Sanctity of the marriage tie against the wanton Henry VIII of England. Paul III "opens the Sacred College to Reformers on the Catholic side—to Reginald Pole, Sadoleto and Contarini . , . . A new Company enters on the scene. By the momentous Bull "*Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae,*" in 1540, the Company of Jesus has its approval from Paul III, who exclaims, after reading a draft of its Constitutions: "*The finger of God is here.*" Other Religious Orders too are approved, like the Theatines, the Barnabites and the Capuchins. Men of God, like St. Charles Borromeo, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Peter Canisius, St. Francis Xavier, St. Cajetan, St. Anthony Maria Zaccaria, and a host of others, adorn the Church of God. Finally the whole *Ecclesia Docens,* after overcoming great difficulties moved by France, Spain and the King of the Romans, meets at Trent to reform herself in her head and in her members. She starts by clearly defining her position in matters doctrinal, in order the more easily to reject the errors of the times, however insidious or radical they be. Then she puts the axe at the root of the evil, and draws up drastic ordinations for the reform of Bishops, priests, monks and nuns. It was a new Crusade she started, not against the Turk, but against the powers of darkness that encompassed her on every side and were gnawing her vitals.

"But this new Crusade was calling for a Leader and a plan of campaign. Both were now furnished in the person of Ignatius of Loyola, and by means of the Company of Jesus which he created. One man had found the secret of combating evil within and without the Catholic Communion. It is written in the "*Spiritual Exercises,*" of which a marvellous meditation on the "Two Standards,"—the Standard of Christ and the Standard of Satan—forms, as it were, the strategical centre. The effect was speedily apparent. "In a single generation," says Macaulay, "the whole spirit of the Church of Rome underwent a change." But that change was a reversion to Catholic principles, overlaid

though not extinguished by the secular ambition of prelates and the pagan luxury to which they had yielded themselves. Ignatius could, therefore, as Lord Acton observes, undertake to reform the Church by the Papacy. Loyola built his plans on the very admission of all that it claimed. He compelled the Pope we may say, to realize his own ideals; and Ignatius was canonized, whereas Savonarola had been burnt. His genius moved by the logic of an absolute sincerity. Given the Catholic Faith, reason might apply it freely to every subject; but to save the faith was the first step.

"The history of the Order of Jesus is the history of the great Catholic reaction." Loyola, to give him his conventional name, created the associations of romance, self-sacrifice, discipline, learning, and infinite courage, that set a man against a man—himself becoming the antagonist of Luther—until then unaccountably wanting in Catholicism under the Renaissance. Yet the world had been impressed already by the stupendous greatness of Michael Angelo, by the imperturbable heroism, smiling on death, of Sir Thomas More; it was Rome that appalled and saddened the faithful. Now Rome had its heroes, its resident Saints. Contarini was an apparition of light; Pole a gracious and gentle St. John, opposing his meekness to Henry VIII's tyranny; the stern Caraffa showed, at least, a fanaticism, which must be admired. And it was no small thing that even the shifty and weak Clement VII had let the Kingdom of England go, rather than violate the sanctity of the marriage contract. This was the more significant that, left to himself, the Medici would have bartered all laws, divine and human, for revenge on Charles V, whose kinswoman he was protecting in Christ's name." The awful disease which had attacked the Catholic Church had been overcome; "unreformed and disorganized, the Government of which Paul III was the last representative had been shattered as by an earthquake. But the Catholic Church remained. Gathering her resources, first in the Jesuit order, then in the Council of Trent, and putting them into the hands of a renovated Papacy, she went forward in the New and Old World undauntedly."

The conclusion to be drawn from the facts mentioned above is clear. The Catholic Church is an institution both human and divine. She is human, not only because her members are men, and because she lives and works among men; but also because her members are subject to all the physical and moral miseries of a fallen humanity. And the powers of evil seem at times to have the upper hand, and obscure the divine element in the Church. Yet, though the latter may be obscured, it can never be extinguished. As we have shown, the Sanctity of Christ has never disappeared from the Church of Christ; but it has always been there, reproachful and comforting, patient and enduring. The ideals of Christ have never been lost, but have always been able to break through the clouds which encompassed them on every side. The virtue of Christ has overcome diseases and maladies, that would have destroyed any purely human organism. The Church has always had within herself the source of her own recovery, she has always been able to cure her own sickness, she has ever triumphed over the powers of evil. So much so that a study of even the worst periods of her History is beneficial to us, for it shows as clear as daylight that a special Providence watches over the Church, and always guides her to victory. The matter, however, is so important, that the Reader will forgive us if we add here a special Appendix, wherein we shall develop this idea at greater length.

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APPENDIX TO CHAPTER X

THE STABILITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

We all remember our Lord's conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. "Every one that heareth these my words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock, and the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock." (Matt. VII). These words can be applied to the Catholic Church, against which the winds of false doctrines, the flood of political trouble and of internal corruption, have come persistently throughout the ages; but the house fell not, for it was built on a rock.

What we have seen so far is sufficient, I think, to lead us to the conclusion that only God's omnipotent hand could have brought the Church safe through storms which would have proved fatal to a merely human institution. Yet that this conclusion may appear even more clear and forcible I submit the following remarks.

The perils which the Church has passed through in her history are of three kinds, according as they are viewed in connection with her doctrine, her unity and her sanctity. As to the dangers to her sanctity, and as to the success of the Church in avoiding them, enough has been said in the preceding pages. Here some considerations will be made only in regard to the perils to her doctrine, and to her unity.

Dangers for the purity of her doctrine arise both within and without the Church. Within the Church there is always the possibility of misinterpreting the message of Christ. This is due either to a spirit of narrow intolerance and unbalanced fideism, or to a proud contempt of antiquity and an exaggerated pruriency

for novelties. As these tendencies are inherent in human nature, the perils to doctrinal purity arising therefrom are never entirely absent in the Church.

The perils from without seem to be more numerous and overwhelming. Among others we notice the infiltrations of human philosophy, which under cover of better understanding and explaining Christ's teaching, often distort and disfigure it. Side by side there comes the dissolving action of Rationalism, which aims at reducing all revelation to reason, and at denying, or scornfully rejecting, whatever it cannot comprehend. All weapons are good to fight against Catholic dogma; whether they be arrows borrowed from historical archives, or rapiers polished with the subtleties of hypercriticism, or swords sharpened in physical or biological laboratories, or the heavy artillery wielded with the skilful precision of dialectics and the dark inerrancy of self-sufficing metaphysics.

But the Catholic Church, either gathered in Oecumenical Council, and teaching with all the solemnity that is derived from such an assembly, or expounding Christ's doctrine through the mouth of her Bishops, who teach and govern under the ordinary guidance of the Vicar of Christ, has successfully withstood all these assaults. Now she quietly corrects her erring children and points the way to the wanderers, now she strongly reproves the obstinate, now she prunes and sternly cuts off the diseased branches that are threatening the health of the vine. From the Council of Nicea to the Council of the Vatican, from Pope Leo I to Pope Pius XI, the teaching Church of Christ, consisting of all the Bishops in communion with Rome has faithfully guarded "*the deposit*" entrusted to her by Jesus Christ.

The Pastors of Alexandria, Antioch, and other Episcopal Sees, were often more learned and brilliant than the Roman Bishops. Yet many of these Sees have been unable to resist the allurements of error. Rome on the other hand, has ever conquered. The victory was not due to the superior knowledge

of well-trained theologians, it was due to the fact that Christ was with Rome and guided her destinies.

All those that have separated themselves from her, sooner or later have lost Christ's precious gem; or, forgetting its value, they have hidden it in the earth, when they have not bartered it for more shining baubles and more showy trinkets. Rome alone has ever been faithful and secure. Now, one that realises the insidious tactics of error, its cleverness in aping the truth, its ability in seeking allies among scientists and philosophers; one that knows the irresistible power of sarcasm and ridicule, the desire inborn in us to be up-to-date, the dread many have of being called old-fashioned and narrowminded; one that has, at least once in his life, endeavoured to wade through the intricacies of dogma without getting entangled in the meshes of fatalism or of theism, of Nestorianism or of Euticheanism, of Pelagianism or of Calvinism, will be positively astounded when he reflects that through the span of twenty centuries, in matters directly and essentially connected with Christian Dogma and Christian Morality, in her official and universal teaching, Rome has never once been caught propounding what is false and erroneous.

In matters political and scientific she has shared the various opinions of the times in which she lived and often she has erred with the scientists of the age. This could not be otherwise, for she is human, and no special safeguard was promised her in this sphere.

But that no example of sure and well authenticated error in matters of faith and morals could ever be pointed out against her by keen historians and sharp theologians, who have pored over the immense mass of papal pronouncements and conciliary definitions, which have been made in twenty centuries of a very active and chequered life, is surely more than human. Nothing can be picked out, from the fierce battles of the first five centuries, when the great Christological problems were debated with

vehement vigour, both in the East and in the West. Nothing can be found in the dark ages, that go from the seventh to the eleventh century when Europe was shrouded in ignorance, and covered with blood. Not a shred of evidence can be obtained from the bulls of the fierce medieval Popes, or from the teaching of the politically minded Pontiffs of the Renaissance, when their pronouncements needed not apparently be as guarded as they must needs be after the breach wrought by Protestantism, and the call to arms sounded at Trent.

Now, this, as a historical fact, seems to me altogether inexplicable when we apply to it the ordinary laws of Psychology and of human behaviour. *Digitus Dei est hic*—is the phrase that comes naturally to the mind: Here is indeed the finger of God.

Not less inexplicable appears the stability of the Catholic Church in the face of all the dangers which imperil her unity.

That the Supreme Pontiffs should have outlived all the early Persecutors, who wielded unbounded power against unprotected weakness, terrible cunning against the simplicity of the Gospel, so prominent in the lives of their victims, and all cruelty against the unarmed weakness of the Christian Martyrs, is astounding enough. But that the same Pontiffs should have come out unscathed from the ordeals of the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, when Rome was overrun by bloody adventurers, when powerful parties were trying to capture and enslave the Papacy, when no protection could be expected from Byzantium, but rather more subtle snares and darker pitfalls, is little short of miraculous. Some Popes were certainly men of great natural prudence and ability; but the young and inexperienced were not wanting. The great majority were saintly men, and so were reputed for their holiness; yet in those iron centuries, others have not been lacking who by their worldly lives, their easy alliances with unscrupulous princes, or their weak yielding to powerful men and vicious women, brought disgrace to their

sublime position. Yet the Church ever prospered and increased. Her Missionaries were evangelizing the Franks, the Germans, the Slavs, the Lombards. Her monks, helped and protected by Charlemagne and his immediate successors, were maintaining the sacred fire of learning, and were slowly laying the foundation of Christian Europe, which would, later on, take her place in the progress of humanity.

Some may think that the alliance of the Papacy with the Empire, which began under Charlemagne, is responsible for the growing stability and power of the Roman Pontiffs in the Middle Ages. Yet the sword which the emperors wielded was double-edged; and not infrequently did it cut deep wounds in the mystical body for whose protection it was bestowed. The anti-Popes, who so frequently appear on the scenes of Medieval History, were often the creatures of Kings and Emperors, who found in them convenient tools to carry out their plans, and handy weapons with which to defend themselves from Papal fulminations. However, Rome could withstand even this terrible trial, which would have ruined an earthly kingdom, and would have shattered any princely dynasty, however wealthy, and respected, and deeply rooted in the affections of the people. The beginnings of modern nationalism are to be found in the Middle Ages, and then, as now, this exaggerated tendency was a deadly foe to Catholic unity. The humiliation of the Papacy perpetrated by the French King Philip the Fair in the person of Boniface VIII, has been regarded by many as the triumph of Nationalism over Christendom, of State over Church. The Pontiff, old and defenceless, was in Anagni, waiting for the soldiers who had been sent to seize him. Vested in his pontifical robes, and holding in his hands the keys of St. Peter, he waited his attackers, his only hope being the reverence of Christian men for his exalted office. But all was in vain; he was outraged and imprisoned. Even Dante, the Antagonist of Boniface, compared that day to the tragedy of Calvary.

"I see the fleur-de-lys enter Anagni,
I see Christ captive in His Vicar,
I see the mocking acted again,
And He is crucified anew between two thieves."

But that was only the beginning of the Church's woes. Soon the Pontiffs were to leave Rome and go to Avignon to live there in a magnificent palace, whilst all the time they were running the danger of making the Vicar of Christ the Court-Chaplain of the King of France. Christendom was grieved to see the Tiara thus degraded, and Rome, the Sacred City, a prey to free-booters; yet its unity was not broken; and after more than seventy years of a new Babylonian Captivity, the Roman Pontiffs returned to their post. It was not long, however, till the faction of nationalism, joined with other causes, started the great western Schism. Were Catholicism not divine, it must have perished under the load of such degradation; when it did not know who its guide was, and when the most exalted office on earth was hotly contested by two, or three parties at the same time. Each put forward its own candidate, who was duly crowned, and forthwith excommunicated by the rival claimant. The roots of the Papacy must have sunk very deep in the hearts of the people, not to have perished in such a catastrophe.

The very fact of the Papacy being an elective monarchy (certainly not the most stable among various forms of government) contributed to its inherent weakness, by attracting the ambition of worldly ecclesiastics, by lending itself to the intrigues of rival monarchs, each endeavouring to secure the prize for his own minion. But God Almighty seemed purposely to choose the things that are weak and foolish and contemptible in the world "that no flesh should glory in his sight," (Cfr. I Cor. I, 17) *i. e.*, that no man should take credit to himself for what had been the work of God. We read in the book of Judges how the Lord said to Gideon: "The people that are with thee are many, and Madian shall not be delivered into

thy hands lest Israel should glory against Me, and say: I was delivered by my own strength." So he bade him keep but 300 men of the assembled host of 32,000. Gideon obeyed, and with this insignificant force he put a great army to rout. And as the hand of God was manifest in the triumph of Gideon inspite of inferiority of numbers, so has it been manifest in the survival of the Papacy in spite of the occasional weakness or unworthiness of those who have sat on the throne of Peter.

We may fitly add here the following quotation from a Protestant writer, Macaulay, who says, in his essay on Ranke's History of the Popes: "There is not and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilization. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday when compared with the line of Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in unbroken series from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the XIX century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the VIII; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends .... The Republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the Republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy; and the Republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigour. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world, missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila .... Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all .... It is not strange that, in the year 1799, even sagacious observers should have thought that, at length, the hour of the Church of Rome was come. An infidel power in the ascendant, the Pope dying in captivity, the most illustrious Prelates of France living in a

foreign country on Protestant alms, the noblest edifices which the munificence of former ages had consecrated to the worship of God turned into temples of victory, or into banqueting houses for political societies.... But the end was not yet.... Anarchy had its day. A new order of things rose out of the confusion, new dynasties, new laws, new titles; and amidst them emerged the ancient religion. The Arabs have a fable that the Great Pyramid was built by antidiluvian kings, and alone of all the works of men, bore the weight of the flood. Such as this was the fate of the Papacy. It had been buried under the great inundation; but its deep foundation had remained unshaken; and when the waters abated it appeared alone amidst the ruins of the world that had passed away. The Republic of Holland was gone, and the empire of Germany, and the great council of Venice and the old Helvetian league, and the house of Bourbon and the Parliaments and aristocracy of France. Europe was full of young creations, a French empire, a kingdom of Italy, a confederation of the Rhine. Nor did the late events affect only territorial limits and political institutions. The distribution of property, the composition and spirit of society, had, through a great part of Catholic Europe, undergone a complete change. But the unchangeable Church was still there."

Superficial observers may compare the stability of Catholicism with the antiquity and vitality of some Eastern Religions like Islamism and Hinduism. We shall not dwell at length on Islamism which, having established itself mainly by the sword, and having attained to considerable culture in its early development, soon allowed its followers to slide back into ignorance and intellectual inactivity, thus escaping all the dangers which arise from the keen exercise of human reason. It also derived its strength in the past from its close associations with political power. Now that these bonds are severed, at least in some lands, and that the light of civilization is slowly penetrating among the Mussulmans, it is perhaps immature to foretell a religious dissolution, though critics are not wanting who see its signs

looming large on the horizon. Still all must see the incongruity of comparing the stability of the Christian Religion with the rigidity of Mahomedanism. The former is established by the Cross, the latter by the sword; the former is embraced by the learned and the unlearned, and the main bulk of its followers are found amongst the foremost nations in the world, the latter thrives chiefly among the ignorant and the backward classes. Catholicism has triumphed against the most ingenious attacks of Rationalism and Atheism; Islamism has not yet proved its metal in this contest, which is the deadliest of all contests.

As to Hinduism—and what we say of Hinduism can, with a certain proportion, be applied to Buddhism and the religions of China and Japan—we remark that it is not a religion intellectually organized, teaching a well defined body of doctrines, which can definitely be attacked and fought against. Hence its opponents are in an analogous predicament to that of the valiant Crusader, who was fighting against elusive genii and deceptive witches. The blows of his powerful sword were all in vain, for his enemies were not flesh and blood, which can be cut or spilt in fair battle. Similarly Hinduism possesses all the elusiveness and vagueness of a cloud; beautiful at times and most attractive, at times threatening and dark; ever disappearing in one place, to appear again in another, almost the same, and yet different, seemingly possessing all its old characteristics and at the same time deprived of its ancient contents.

A Religion more different from Catholicism can hardly be imagined. If the former is like a cloud, the latter is like a rock, clearcut and well defined. Hinduism cannot be attacked, because it has no consistency; hence it lives on as the clouds do; or as the dreams and imaginations of humanity live on—not because they are true, but because they are dreams and imaginations. Catholicism on the contrary, can be, and is constantly attacked, precisely because it is definite, and clear, and sharp like a rock. To know what it teaches one has only to study it; its attitude is

never vague. If its adversaries are baffled by it, it is not because it is unearthly and weird, but because it has all the strength of a block of granite, against which even the finest steel is powerless.

Again, Hinduism, is not an organism well constituted, acknowledging the supremacy of one teacher whose word is law in matters of faith and morals. It is rather a loosely-built social system, which embraces the varying customs of the peoples of India, infinitely changeful, yet with certain familiar features running through; and thus forming a peculiar ethnological type, quite distinct from the European or the Semitic types. Consequently Hinduism has the stability of a social system and of the customs of a particular group of peoples, which are not determined by definite beliefs, but mainly by climatic and historical reasons. These, reacting on a population full of sentiment and imagination, have easily merged into the religious atmosphere and have found support in religions myths and supposed revelations. There is nothing marvellous in its continuance, nothing supernatural in its solidity. All finds its explanation in social and historical laws, acting and reacting with each other. Catholicism on the contrary, though influencing our customs, is quite distinct from them; though satisfying our noblest needs, transcends them all. It is something which does not blossom from earthly roots, but comes from elsewhere. Hence it does not borrow its stability from our nature, and from our customs; but it obtains it from another source, which is above nature; which is God Himself.

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CHAPTER XI

CHRISTIAN ASCETICISM

After dealing with Christian Sanctity in its sources, and in those of its manifestations which bear a distinctly social aspect, it is well to consider it more intimately, in order to grasp its essence and to understand its fecundity. Just as the beauty of a man's character does not all come out when we observe him in his public capacity, for the most delicate traits are hidden then, and do not manifest themselves outside his family, or the limited circle of his friends; so the intimate beauty of Christian Sanctity does not appear in all its loveableness, when we look at it merely in its social and public aspects. We must see it at home, as it were, near its native hearth, when it has set aside its robes of state, or the steel armour, which hides it features.

This will be attempted in the three following chapters, of which the present one treats of Christian Asceticism, the next of Christian Mysticism, and the third will dwell at some length on the Religious Life.

The word "*Asceticism*" is derived from the Greek verb "askeo" and means exercise, both of body and mind. The verb was applied with equal appropriateness to the athlete endeavouring to keep in form, to the Stoic striving to dominate his sensibility, or to the Neo-Platonist, exercising his faculties in an attempt to attain to the Divinity.

Asceticism, under its various forms was practised in India from time immemorial; even now many an untravelled Westerner regards it mainly as the land of *Yogis* and *Fakirs*. In Greece we read of the severe ascetical exercises to which the followers of *Pythagoras* subjected themselves, in order to be admitted to share the knowledge of the Master. They abstained from flesh-meat, they avoided the company of men, they cultivated

silence and recollection. The "*abstine et sustine*" of the Stoics is still famous, and is often quoted in ascetical writings. Among the *Jews* we find the *Nazarites* and the *Essenes*, who practised Asceticism. The latter chiefly, detested all delicacies in food and clothing; they did not marry, they rarely mixed with their fellowmen, they did not drink wine, and lived mostly on vegetables. All this testifies to a profound conviction, spread everywhere among men, that self-control, self-conquest, self-abnegation, self-sacrifice, are necessary to attain that perfect dominion of reason over the senses, without which no real progress and no true civilization is possible.

The philosophical basis of *Christian Asceticism* is indicated in the following words of St. Augustine: "*Satis ostendis quam magnam feceris creaturam rationalem, cui nullo modo sufficit ad beatam requiem quidquid te minus est.*" (Conf. XIII, 8). "Thou showest how great Thou hast made the creatures that are endowed with reason; for nothing that is less than Thee sufficeth to give them a blissful repose." By reason of this inherent greatness, we soon discover the vanity and emptiness of created things, and realize that they tie down the aspirations and flights of our souls. Hence we wish to break their bonds, or at least to master the lower creation in such a manner, that, instead of being a hindrance to our ascension towards God, it should be a help.

The Christian, having received sanctifying grace in Baptism, and having the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity infused into his soul, desires that such a precious germ should not be lost, but it should sprout, develop and bear fruit in the sight of God. He sees, however, the great difficulties, which stand in the way of perfection; he feels the war raging even in his own body; he understands that the world which surrounds him, is all "*concupiscentia carnis, concupiscentia oculorum et superbia vitae,*" "concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life" (I John, II, 16) and generously decides to fight and to conquer. It is only thus that sanctifying grace will

finally open to him the beatific vision, and faith will merge into the light of glory, and hope will cease, that charity alone may reign in eternal triumph.

Thus a certain amount of asceticism is necessary to all who desire to attain salvation; and the words of Christ, though first addressed to His Disciples, are finally intended for all: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For he that will save his life, shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it." (Matt. XVI).

St. Thomas, following the Fathers of the Church, and chiefly St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Gregory the Great, distinguishes three degrees in Asceticism, according as those who practise it are beginners, or more advanced, or perfect, in the spiritual life. Hence we have the three ways: purgative, illuminative, and unitive.

In the first walk those whose passions are still very strong and keep them in constant danger of falling into mortal sin. They do desire to serve God, but the world holds a great attraction for them. It is, therefore, good for them to meditate often on the eternal truths, on the four last things, on the terrible judgments of God, "in order that, if through their faults, they forget the love of the Eternal Lord, at least the fear of punishment may help them not to fall into sin." (St. Ignatius). The virtue they should chiefly practise is penance, which is interior and exterior, corresponding to the nature of man, which consists of body and soul, and to the nature of sin, which is a *turning away* from God, and a *turning towards* created things. Interior penance, which is properly in the will, is made up of acts of contrition and purpose of amendment. Its spirit is the spirit of the *Miserere* and the seven Penitential Psalms. Clearly this is the soul of all satisfaction, and without it exterior penance is worth nothing. The latter is practised as often as we inflict pain on the senses in order to atone for sin. The three kinds of exterior penance most common in the History of the Church are

fasting, watching and bodily chastisements, to which should be added almsgiving, and pilgrimages to the Holy Land, to Rome, to Compostella in Spain, or to some other Sanctuary famous in Christendom, like Loretto, Canterbury etc.

The illuminative way is characterized by a greater abundance of light, and greater love for God and for heavenly things. The battle is still fierce, but the danger of falling into mortal sin is less. Venial sin is now the great enemy, which diminishes the splendour and fervour of charity, disfigures our most virtuous acts with the dust of vanity, or sloth, and covertly paves the way to the return of our deadliest enemy, mortal sin. Asceticism at this stage is less negative than it was. Formerly its motto was: "Thou shalt not,"—now its chief exercise is the strenuous practice of the moral virtues. The ascetic is conscious now of belonging to the Army of Christ, and desires to fight his battles with Him. He has realized that his duty is to follow Christ, who, having made Himself like unto us in all things, sin alone excepted, leads us to the conquest of the flesh, the world and the devil. He himself has already overcome the enemy, and by the grace He bestows and the love which He inspires, He gives us confidence that we will, in like manner, be victorious and invincible.

The unitive way is of those who have reached the perfection of charity, who have conquered self, and realized the emptiness of all earthly things, and, plunged in the divine Love, do everything in God and for God. The creatures, which in the beginning of the spiritual life constituted such a great obstacle to sanctification, are now friendly and helpful. The perfect can return to Creation through the Creator, and find it pure and adorned with the beauty which it possessed in the days of primeval innocence. We have examples of this in the lives of St. Francis of Assisi, and, more recently, of St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus. Here we are on the border line between Asceticism and Mysticism. St. John of the Cross describes the stage immediately preceding perfection in the following words: "With regard to exterior things the soul

falls at first into a state of great forgetfulness.....it shows so great a negligence and so great a contempt of self that, lost in God, it forgets to eat or drink, and it no longer knows if it has done a thing or not, or whether or not it has been spoken to by anyone." But once perfection has been reached, everything changes; "once the soul has become firmly established in the habit of a union which is its sovereign good, it no longer forgets reasonable things and things of moral and physical necessity. On the contrary, it is more perfect when engaged in works suitable to its state of life although it accomplishes them by the help of images and knowledge which God excites in a special manner in the memory. All the powers of the soul are, as it were, transformed in God."

Of course, it must not be supposed that the three ways of Christian Asceticism are isolated, and entirely separated one from the other. No; even beginners may enjoy times of real peace, bathed in the light of the Lord; and the perfect also, may at times experience the old battles. The Christian Ascetic can never lay aside his arms so long as he lives this mortal life, far away from the home of happiness, which is the home of God.

A word may be said here on the various schools of Christian Asceticism. Remembering first of all that the general aim of Asceticism is the rejection of all the lying principles of selfishness, that is to say, the denial of self-assertion, both bodily and spiritual, in order that the law of reason, order and charity should have the upper hand, and that man should secure the habitual disposition of ready obedience of blind nature to reason and to God—it is plain that, if in the Catholic Church there have been, or there do actually exist several schools of Asceticism, their differences must all be accidental and confined to the outward application of the same fundamental principle. Another remark must also be made, that Charity towards God, which is at the root of all ascetical exercises, manifests itself in different ways, according as its *unitive* or its *benevolent* tendency

is emphasized. That charity does imply these two tendencies is plain; for charity is love, and it is of the essence of love to seek for *union* with the beloved, and to desire a "*mutual interchange* on either side, that is to say in the lover giving and communicating with the beloved what he has or can give, and, on the other hand, in the beloved sharing with the lover." (St. Ignatius). If the benevolent tendency predominates, then we have what we may call *effective charity*, which manifests itself in a kind of Asceticism better fitted to the apostolic and active life—the life of the preachers, the missionaries, the military Orders, the Orders of men and women working in hospitals, in schools, among the poor. If, on the other hand, the unitive tendency predominates, then *affective charity* is uppermost. This charity colours in a peculiar manner the Asceticism of the contemplatives, of those who live in solitude, and attend mainly to their own sanctification.

The various schools of Christian Asceticism gravitate round these two foci, bringing into special prominence, now one aspect of charity, now the other. It is to be noticed, however, that no school of Asceticism which has remained Catholic, has ever entirely separated the two tendencies mentioned above. For union, dissociated from the spirit of active charity, would soon degenerate into selfish laziness and quietism; whilst benevolence, divorced from the interior spirit of union, would end in a kind of philanthropy and purely humanitarian endeavour.

The different schools and tendencies of Christian Asceticism appear chiefly in the ascetical books which have shaped, and do shape, Christian effort to conquer man's lower nature, and approach nearer and nearer to God.

We shall just mention here St. Augustine's *Confessions* and the *City of God*, which have exercised an incalculable influence chiefly in the Middle Ages. Augustine, who has not made his greatness felt so much in the Eastern Church, where St. Basil, the Sts Gregory and St. John Chrysostom have remained

paramount, is unquestionably the Father *par excellence* of the Western Church. In him is abridged and resumed the whole of Christian Antiquity. Just as he has prepared the theological development of the Middle Ages, so he has moulded their Asceticism; for, he is not merely the Teacher of Christian Science, he is also the Doctor of Christian Piety. St. Augustine had the intelligence of an eagle, which, coupled with his love for truth, and with his early platonic formation, might have become as shining as the snow-capped mountains—and, perhaps, as cold. But happily his intelligence was tempered by his exquisite sensibility, purified and transfigured by contact with the deep piety of his mother. The sincere regret which St. Augustine felt all his life for the sins of his youth and which is so touchingly apparent in the Confessions, his personal experience, which made him realize the frailty of man, produced in him a profound humility, and a clear conviction of the nothingness of man in the sight of God. God, on the one side, appeared to him as light and life; man, on the other, as darkness, corruption and death. Jesus Christ fills the abyss which separates the two, and brings to man light, and life, and God. Influenced by this fundamental idea, and perhaps also by the knowledge of the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert*, which were already beginning to be read, he turned towards contemplation and Asceticism, which seemed to him the best realization of Religion. But contact with the great Bishop of Milan, St Ambrose, and his own gifts as orator, writer and administrator, made him soon understand that the perfect Asceticism of a Christian was not exactly the Asceticism of a recluse, or of an isolated spirit groping in its search for God. Christian Asceticism must develop in the great social organism of the Church, in the mystical body of Christ. The individual tendency which appears in the *Confessions* is merged into the social tendency which is prominent in the *City of God*, and both, together with the other works of St. Augustine, are blended into a harmonious whole, such as is exemplified in his own life. For, "a marvellous intelligence united to a heart tender and

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compassionate; an ardent piety naturally contemplative, united to a vivid sentiment of what was demanded in practice by the defence of truth the direction of the faithful and the government of the Church, made of Augustine a great philosopher, a great theologian, a great controversialist, a great mystic, a great Bishop and a great Saint." (Cfr. Tixeront; *Histoire des Dogmes* II, 358).

The influence of St. Augustine on Christian Asceticism was transmitted to later ages mainly through St. Gregory the Great. As a learned non-Catholic writer puts it, "Gregory is certainly one of the most notable figures in Ecclesiastical History. He has exercised in many respects a momentous influence on the doctrine, the organization and the discipline of the Catholic Church. To him we must look for an explanation of the religious situation of the Middle Ages; indeed, if no account were taken of his work, the evolution of the form of medieval Christianity would be almost inexplicable. And further, in so far as the modern Catholic system is a legitimate development of medieval Catholicism, of this too Gregory may not unreasonably be termed the Father. Almost all the leading principles of the later Catholicism are found, at any rate in germ, in Gregory the Great." (F. H. Dudden in Cath. Encycl.).

The *Regula Pastoralis* of St. Gregory was the book for the "professional education" of the Churchmen of the Middle Ages. There priests, preachers, spiritual directors and confessors, found a teacher and a guide. His Homilies, his Commentaries on Job and Ezechiel, the *Moralia*, and the *Dialogues*, were found in every Convent and in every library. A monk himself for several years, Gregory's love of Asceticism is striking. His tendency, decidedly caenobitical and mystical at the beginning, is tempered later by the circumstances of his life. And in him, as in St. Augustine, affective and effective love are harmoniously blended and organized.

Coming to the Middle Ages we have the great masterpiece of *Thomas a Kempis*. Prof. Harnack in his book "What is

Christianity?" counts the *Imitation of Christ* as one of the chief spiritual forces in Catholicism and Milman affirms that "in it was gathered and concentrated all that was elevating, passionate, profoundly pious in the older mystics." The *Imitation* has been translated into over fifty languages, and is said to have run into more than 6,000 editions; hence the assertion that, with the exception of the Bible, no book has had a wider religious influence is probably true.

It is not correct to call it a mystical book, for it is essentially ascetical, though the unitive or affective tendency predominates. The book is practical and clear to a degree. It is not lost in the mazes of Scholasticism, nor encumbered with neo-platonic nebulosities, nor is it replete with obscure mystical expressions. It is limpid and terse; every sentence "being easily understandable by all whose spiritual sense is in any degree awakened."

Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas, praeter amare Deum et illi soli servire,"—is a resumé of its whole doctrine, and, in fact, of Christian Asceticism. The battle which all must wage is directed against pride, impatience, sensuality, pusillanimity—and the measure of our spiritual progress is the violence which we do to ourselves. (I, 25).

But once the passions are subjugated, let us close the door of the spirit and dwell with Jesus and love Jesus. (I, 20). "When Jesus is present all goes well and nothing seems difficult, but when Jesus is absent everything is hard.... Happy hour, when Jesus calls from tears to joy of spirit.... What can the world profit thee without Jesus? To be without Jesus is a grievous hell, and to be with Jesus a sweet paradise.... It is a great art to know how to converse with Jesus, and to know how to keep Jesus is great wisdom. Be humble and peaceable and Jesus will be with thee. Be devout and quiet and Jesus will stay with thee!" (II, 8). "Of all that are dear to thee, let Jesus always be thy special beloved.... For him and in him, let both friends and enemies be dear to thee, and for all these must thou

pray to him, that all may know and love him." (II, 8). For certainly "love is an excellent thing, a great good indeed which maketh light all that is burdensome, and equally bears all that is unequal.... The love of Jesus is noble and generous... love will tend upwards, and is not to be detained by things on earth. Love will be at liberty from all worldly affection, lest its interior sight be hindered.... Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger.... The lover flies, runs, and rejoices.... love knows no measure.... feels no burden.... love watches and sleeping slumbers not. Whosoever loveth, knoweth the cry of this voice." (III, 5).

Evidently we have here outlined the purgative, the illuminative and the unitive way. The substance and crown of Asceticism is all here. But, precisely because it is so profoundly catholic and traditional, the Imitation is so free from all conventionality, so psychologically correct, that it has always been a favourite with all Christians, even those who are unhappily without the fold. In fact, even Hindus and Buddhists love it, drawn to it by its sweet humanity and large-heartedness, and the unclouded serenity of God's own spirit which it possesses. Though the apostolic virtues of zeal, love for souls, burning activity, are not over-emphasized by Thomas a Kempis—the old Canon, who was probably the Author of this book—yet the two fundamental tendencies of charity are so well combined, that the little book deserves to be called the masterpiece of the Middle Ages, and—leaving aside the Holy Bible—perhaps, of all ages.

However short this sketch of Christian Asceticism, it cannot possibly omit mentioning two other books, which have been of paramount importance in the Catholic Church; I mean the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Introduction to a Devout Life.* Both the authors are canonized Saints, and the two books contain the quintessence of Asceticism; they reflect, however, the characteristics, one, of the Soldier-Saint, Ignatius of Loyola, the other, of the "Good Shepherd" of Geneva, Francis de Sales.

The Spiritual Exercises, which are not meant to be read, but "to be made" acquaint us at the very outset with their aim, which is "to conquer oneself, and regulate one's life without coming to a determination through any inordinate affection." It is really the picture of a soldier who knows his enemy, conceives the plan of battle, and endeavours to realize it as straight as an arrow.

The first part of the Exercises is mainly devoted to the purgative way. The next, which opens with the Contemplation on the Kingdom of Christ, belongs to the illuminative way. Here all the ruses of the enemy are manifested, and all the virtues of our King and Leader are set out in striking tableaux. The very method of meditating is changed; the psychology of conversion is followed in its most secret recesses, the mainsprings of action are—as it were—wound up as those of a clock, so that, once the light illumines the soul, great decisions should be taken, a thorough reformation of life should be accomplished, clearly, methodically, unrelentingly. Then comes the unitive way of the so-called third and fourth weeks, when the resolutions are confirmed, and the soul is attuned "to feel" with Christ both suffering and triumphant, on Mount Calvary, and at the right hand of the Father.

All is interspersed with such beautiful and varied methods of prayer, and of examining one's conscience, with such wealth of rules and directions for the discernment of spirits, for the election of one's state in life, for the distribution of alms, for thinking with the Church, as to make the book a veritable armoury of spiritual warfare. No doubt, the Spiritual Exercises "has been one of the world moving books." Strictly speaking, it is only the application of the principles of the Gospel to the spiritual life of each individual soul. Hence its substance is not original. Some, moreover, find its model in the "*Exercitatorio de la Vida Spiritual*" written by the Benedictine Abbot Garcias de Cisneros. The title may have been borrowed; perhaps

also the divisions, and some of the meditations. Yet the differences are great. First of all there is the wonderful psychological connection of the various parts, and even of the minutest details of the "*Spiritual Exercises*," which makes them a real and living treatise of spiritual strategy. Next, and most important of all, the insistence of St. Ignatius on the Exercises being communicated by a *Spiritual Director*. This brought Spiritual Direction, which had been practised in the Church by the Religious of both sexes from time immemorial, down among the faithful who live in the world. And the Sons of Ignatius became gradually the most skilful Directors of souls, sought after by Kings and Queens, Noblemen and Ladies, rich and poor, Priests and Religious. Thus the practice of Christian Asceticism, which had been mostly confined to Monasteries and Convents, became more common among seculars, at least till the suppression of the Society of Jesus. But not only did Spiritual Direction make the practice of Asceticism more common, it made it also more uniform and better regulated. Some of the strange excesses of former times were done away with; and though external penance has never been at a discount in the Catholic Church, the internal mortification of pride and stubbornness has come to enjoy greater esteem.

The aim of the *Introduction to the Devout Life* is to lead souls, and in a special manner those living in the world, into the paths of solid Christian devotion. The word "devotion," thanks to the shallow scepticism of modern times, has all but lost its genuine meaning. But, when rightly understood, it is most lofty and noble, for it implies the generous offering of self to God, and, for God's sake, to man. "Everyone," says St. Francis, "paints devotion according to his own whim or liking. The man who is addicted to fasting thinks himself very devout if he fasts with a heart full of rancour all the time and though he trembles at the very idea of wetting his tongue with wine, or even water, he does not hesitate to wet it with his neighbour's blood by slander and calumny. Another forgives his enemies,

but never pays his creditors until the law forces him. And such people as these are vulgarly thought devout, but are not." (Part I, Chap. I). True devotion, on the contrary, "presupposes the love of God; it is in fact nothing but the true love of God, and that not of a kind or sort, but a love that has made some progress in the perfection towards which it makes us carefully, frequently, and promptly operate. This love is no other thing than a certain spiritual equability and vivacity, which renders us not only prompt and diligent to fulfil all God's commandments; but going further, provokes us to do all the good works we can, and to do them promptly and affectionately those also that are not commanded, but are only of inspiration or counsel. If charity is a plant, devotion is its blossom; if a precious stone, devotion is its brilliancy; if a balm, devotion is the sweetness of its odour." (Part I, Chap. XII).

The work, which is divided into five parts, is a masterpiece of psychological insight, deep piety, and sound commonsense.

In the first part we are helped to free ourselves from all inclination to, or affection for, sin. The soul is to be purified not only from mortal, but also from venial sin, and even from useless affections.

In the second part St. Francis teaches us how to be united to God through prayer and the Sacraments, for, as it is evident from what we have been discoursing so far, though there are analogies between the philosophical and the Christian path to perfection, though they both start with clearing the ground, and purging the soul from its maladies, yet they differ profoundly in principle, aim and method. The philosopher believes that man can attain to perfection through his own unaided efforts. The Christian knows he has to exert himself, but his exertions have to be made fruitful by God's help. Hence the Christian prays, the philosopher does not. The philosopher's meditation is a monologue, the Christian's is a dialogue with God. The philosopher knows nothing of the Sacraments, the Christian

has constant recourse to them. The philosopher is an artist, who works for his own satisfaction; the Christian too, is an artist; but he works to please God, and in God's pleasure he finds his own.

The third part is devoted to the exercise of virtue. Now, all Christian virtues spring from, and are consummated in, love. "The will," writes St. Francis, "governs every other faculty of the human spirit, but, in its turn, is governed by the love *that makes the will what it is.*" Hence the will will be divine if it loves God. This love or charity, he says, "never comes into the soul without bringing her train of virtues with her, all of which she moves and exercises as occasion requires, as a captain does his soldiers. She does not set them all to work at once, nor in the same degree, time, or place. The just man, like the tree planted by the water course, brings forth his fruit in season." (Part III, Chap. I).

The fourth part strengthens us against temptation, and the fifth teaches us how to form our resolutions and to persevere. To appreciate the grace and wealth of the mind of St. Francis de Sales, there is only one way, to read him. Here I select just one passage, though selection is not easy among so many equally beautiful pages.

"The rivers which flow gently along the plain, bear on their bosom great ships filled with rich merchandise; the rains that fall softly on the land, fertilize grass and grain. But torrents, rivers that go tumbling in big waves over the earth, make havoc wherever they go, and are useless for traffic; rain that is vehement and tempestuous, ruins fields and meadows. Work that is done impetuously, hurriedly, is never well done; as the old proverb says, *hurry without furry*. Drones make a great deal more noise, fly about much more quickly than other bees, but they only make wax, not honey; and just in the same manner, those people who are always fussing about in a state of poignant anxiety and noisy solicitude, do little, and that little ill. Be like little children holding with one hand their father's

hand, and with the other gathering strawberries, and other berries out of hedges. In the same manner, while you go along, gathering up and handling the things of this world with one hand, with the other hold fast the hand of your Heavenly Father, looking at Him now and again just to see if He is pleased with your home, and with what you are doing. And above all things, never for a moment lose your hold of His aid and protection, thinking you will gather more if you have the use of both your hands, for when He leaves you to yourself, you will not take a single step alone without falling flat on your nose. By all this, my Philothea, I mean that when you are busy with common things and common business matters that do not require the most pressing and urgent attention, you should think of God more than of men. And when your business is such that, to do it well, you must give it your whole attention, you should look at Him now and then; doing as mariners do; for when they want to reach some country they look up to the sky, not down to the waves they are sailing over. In this manner, God will work for you, with you, in you, and, when your work is done, will comfort you."

Before bringing this essay to a close, I shall touch upon an objection which is often urged against the practice of Asceticism, even by good Catholics, and by those who deem it necessary for all men to resist their lower inclinations. The objection refers to the excesses of Asceticism which have been not uncommon among the Saints, and which seem to have excited the admiration not only of the ignorant, but also of pious hagiographers, and of the Church in general.

That there should have been excesses in this matter one does not wonder, for it would be difficult to point to any human activity, which does not lend itself to excess. Before, however, condemning the Saints, one should endeavour to understand their Psychology, and gauge the motives which may have led them to excesses. Now, three great passions seem to have been shared

by all the Catholic Ascetics. The first is *hatred for sin*, which they regard as the greatest evil, in fact, the only real evil of man; for sin severs him from God and exposes him to the danger of eternal damnation, thereby making void the Redemption of Christ. Personal suffering is considered by the Saints, not only as a fit punishment for sins committed, but also as a protection from sin. Since the hatred is intense, the desire to suffer is also intense; consequently it may bring about some ascetical practices in the Saints, which seem but small to them, though to us, who have not fully realized the ugliness of sin, they may seem strange and excessive.

The second is *love for Jesus Christ Crucified.* The Imitation says: "The whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom; and dost thou seek rest and joy?" Indeed this is not the reasoning of a philosopher; but the secret is understood by one who loves. And the heart often sees things, which are impervious to the cold light of the intellect. Before we condemn the Saints we should endeavour to fathom the intensity of their love.

The third is *love for souls*, which, though redeemed by Jesus Christ, are immersed in sin, and in great danger of damnation. The Christian Ascetic believes in human solidarity; his whole faith is based on the Redemption of Christ; he admits the Communion of Saints. That is to say, he is fully convinced that his own sufferings, fortified by Christ's have a virtue of atonement and a power of salvation, whereby God's anger can be appeased, and the hearts of sinners can be converted. So he desires to suffer. He gladly submits to the common sufferings of humanity, and, not satisfied with that, he becomes the tormentor of his own body, and the crucifier of his own flesh. 'They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with their vices and concupiscences." (Gal. V).

It will not be out of place to add here a quotation from Fr. Martindale, who deals with this very subject, with regard to

the principal offenders therein, the ancient Sons of St. Anthony. (Cfr. *The Month*, April 1918). He says: "Whatever the nature of the method they adopted or the greater or less intelligence with which they lived it out, these men had for very simple premises, belief in God, in immortality and in sin. They fled from a wicked world lest they should "lose their soul," and in order—though this was a secondary motive—to convert the world they had left. They worked at the very grammar of the spiritual life, and, without guessing it, often achieved a most subtle knowledge of its minutiae. They began like men anxious to grasp, and then to instil, the necessary rudiments of a dead language.... But the life was in them. In much that these old monks said and did, is to be found an almost terribly strong faith in a few vast things, and an all-day-and-all-night grinding at applying their principles to the stuff their souls provided. If in the doing it, their "eyes grew dross of lead," they cared little enough for that. If they were "dead from the waist down," and paralized for half the occupations of human life, they hever would have pretended that their life was a "full" human life, but rather a "rehearsal of death" better than was "Plato's, for, after all, life was short and eternity long. Do what you will, in an unsophisficated brain, the thoughts of sin, salvation, the soul, eternity, once they take fire, burn up most other thoughts, and these overwhelming considerations draw to themselves all the vitality which elsewhere would be deflected into a hundred channels."

But these monks and hermits went not unrewarded; they did a work valuable for themselves and for those that had to come. *They put order into Asceticism.* And the Saints who came after profited by it. They too had the ideas of God, immortality and sin burnt into their souls, they too hated the world and the flesh; but there was more order in their method of going to God; the high way had been cleared for them, and they did not waste much time in by-ways and foot-paths.

Other objections against Christian Asceticism are brought

forward with a great violence by the followers of Naturalism, by the modern Pelagians and the Humanists. Since all the principles with which they can be solved have already been exposed elsewhere, we shall not dwell on them any longer, but will pass on to another, and perhaps more beautiful, manifestation of Christian Sanctity, that is Christian Mysticism.

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CHAPTER XII

CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

Mysticism, understood in its broadest sense, has ever exercised a strong influence on the human mind. Viewed, either as a philosophical system, or as a religious tendency, it has had its adherents both in the East and in the West; for man everywhere is strangely attracted by the mysterious, and especially when it purports to be a method of directing his efforts to the attainment of the divine.

Philosophical Mysticism has been cultivated in China from very ancient times; but it is India that is regarded by many as its classical home. The three great Systems, the Vedanta, the Sankhya and the Yoga, nurtured as they all were in the intellectual atmosphere of the Upanishads, explicitly professed to be "paths of salvation," methods of "rising from the visible to the invisible." The world, visible and phenomenic, has no real existence; it is but an illusion, a mirage, or at best, a momentary manifestation of the invisible and the absolute. It is the business of Philosophy to reach the absolute, either through pure intuitive knowledge, or through knowledge allied with sacrificial activity.

The genius of Greece was more realistic; yet philosophical Mysticism plays an important part in Platonic thought, and more so in the Neo-Platonic Schools of Alexandria. Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, taught that the wise man, freed from matter and illumined by God, may reach the mystical state where he is absorbed by the Divinity. Later on Plotinus, believing that the human soul was but a spark of the cosmic soul imprisoned in matter, asserted that the end of human life was to return through purification, to the One, whence it came, to be lost there in a kind of ecstasy, or unconscious contemplation.

To come down to times and places nearer to us, *outside Orthodox Christianity*, we notice a strong mystical current, which assumed great proportions in Scotus Eriugena, and, at the beginning of the XIII century, in Meister Eckhart. He teaches the deification of man through contemplation.

Protestant Mysticism, tinged with Kabalism in Reuchlin, appears more as a philosophical tendency than as the fulfilment of a religious desire, in J. Boehme, who conceived God's nature as the receptacle of good and evil, and dreamed a final identification of the Divinity with the soul of man, whose activity chiefly consists in freely kindling the fire of good or of evil. We leave aside the mystical tendencies of the Ontologists, the romantic mysticism of Fichte, the pseudo mysticism of the Modernists, and hasten to give an outline of Catholic Mysticism, especially in its relations with Christian Sanctity.

From what we are going to say, better than from any concise definition we might venture to frame, it will appear that Catholic Mysticism is not a *species* of a *genus* "Mysticism," to which also the exotic Mysticisms we have mentioned do belong. It is a thing entirely apart, possessing features that are peculiarly its own, and which it does not share with any foreign religious phenomenon that may superficially appear to be similar to it.

EARLY CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

Already in St. Paul religious Mysticism has a prominent place. Based on vivid faith in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, it manifests itself by extraordinary facts, which are clearly of two kinds. The first kind, more external, and less closely allied with sanctity, comprise prophecy, praising God in unknown tongues, manifestation of secrets, miracles, discernment of spirits, and so forth. (I Cor. XII). The origin of all these, according to the Apostle, is the Holy Spirit, and they are granted "to every man unto profit." Yet they are not the most excellent gifts, being all surpassed by the queen of virtues, charity, and, apart from

charity; they are of no value, at least to the individual. (I Cor. XIII).

The second kind, more personal to the Apostle, implies a close similitude to Jesus Christ Crucified, a similitude brought about by complete detachment from things created, and by an intense love for the Redeemer. The Apostle wrote: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross; and I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. II). This transfiguration of the human element is sustained by constant prayer, which, sometimes is accompanied by a more transcendent revelation of the secrets of God, when the senses and lower powers of the mind are bound and almost suspended in their activities, whilst the higher faculties of the spirit feel the immediate contact with God, and enjoy a large share, if not the total reality of the beatific vision. (II Cor. XII).

In many of the Fathers mystical experiences were not infrequent, and these, together with a profound knowledge of the Christian doctrine, helped them to start some kind of systematic treatment of Mysticism. They soon understood the difference existing between philosophy and theology, and they clearly taught, what was never realized by ancient mystical writers, that the vision of God is unattainable by the human soul not elevated by supernatural grace. For, in the words of the Apostle St. John: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John I, 18). So they excluded God's intuition, as the result of a pure development of human perceptive powers, and foreshadowed the distinction, which was later on better grasped and more strongly emphasized, between analogical and mystical knowledge.

MEDIEVAL CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

With the pseudo-Dionysius—a writer belonging to the fifth century—the theoretical treatment of Mysticism made great

progress; and his ideas exercised a marked influence on medieval Theologians. In Mysticism the knowledge of God, which is granted to the privileged soul, is higher than the knowledge proper to reason, even when it is enlightened by faith. The soul has a kind of experience of the divine, is passive more than active; in two words, "*patitur divina.*" The Victorines, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas of Aquin make the teaching of Mysticism more precise and better organized.

St. Thomas maintains that, by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the soul is enabled to follow God's inspirations and motions more readily. Whilst by the ordinary virtues we guide ourselves, and seek God's pleasure with greater facility, by the gifts of the Holy Ghost we are disposed to be led more promptly by God, and our faculties become, as it were, his instruments and organs in the performance of acts of extraordinary virtue and heroic sanctity.*

The doctrine of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and their connection with Mysticism is not fully developed by St. Thomas.

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*Manifestum est autem quod virtutes humanae perficiunt hominem secundum quod homo natus est moveri per rationem in his, quæ interius vel exterius agit; oportet igitur inesse homini altiores perfectiones secundum quas sit dispositus ad hoc quod divinitus moveatur et istae perfectiones vocantur dona, non solum quia infunduntur a Deo, sed quia secundum ea homo disponitur, ut efficiatur prompte mobilis ab inspiratione divina. *Prima Sec. Q. LXVIII; a. I in corp.—Et ad primum:* "Huiusmodi dona nominantur quandoque virtutes secundum communem rationem virtutis: habent tamen aliquid superveniens rationi communi virtutis, in quantum sunt quaedam divinae virtutes perficientes hominem in quantum est a Deo motus; unde et Phil. in 7. Et supra virtutem communem ponit quandam virtutem heroicam, vel divinam, secundum quam dicuntur aliqui divini viri. *Et. art. IV ad prim.:* "Potest tamen etiam dici quod, quantum ad infusionem donorum, ars pertinet ad Spiritum Sanctum, qui est principaliter movens; non autem ad homines, qui sunt quaedam organa ejus, dum ab eo moventur.

These passages sufficiently indicate that according to St. Thomas the kind of passivity under God's action, which is a special feature of the mystical states, is to be found also in the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Hence the connection of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and chiefly of the gifts of intellect, knowledge and wisdom, with Mysticism.

Later Theologians assert that the gift of *intellect* makes us grasp the truths of faith, sheds an extraordinary vivid light on them, helps us to see their harmony and beauty, not only in themselves, but also as they afford a rule for our actions. The gift of *knowledge* also strengthens our faith, and gives us a marvellous insight into the harmony of the supernatural with the natural order. Finally the gift of *wisdom* is an illumination of the spirit, by which we are enabled to penetrate into the most sublime mysteries of revelation, to see it in harmony with God, to contemplate it "*per rationes divinas.*" Mystical contemplation is a special effect of these three gifts of the Holy Ghost, by which the soul acquires "*a sweet tasting knowledge of God.*"

In Gerson, the famous Chancellor of the University of Paris, we find one of the best definitions of the mystical state: "The experimental union of the soul with God," he says, "is a simple and actual perception of God, which proceeds from sanctifying grace, begins here on earth, and is perfected in heaven, through consummated grace. This union is therefore a foretaste of glory, and an earnest of eternal happiness.... Hence one is led to a precise and condensed definition of Mystical Theology, by saying: *It is an experimental perception of God.* The word "*perception*" is preferred to the word "*knowledge,*" for the union is accomplished by the perceptive as well as by the affective faculties of the soul." *(Super Magnificat*; Tract VII).

So far Gerson. But the classical writers on Mystical Theology are to be found in the XVI century, in Spain. No doubt, St. Gertrude, St. Bridget, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Catherine of Genoa, Blessed Angela of Foligno, Blessed Juliana of Norwich, and many others, have left us abundant mystical writings; but therein we are made acquainted with their experiences, and we find excellent food for meditation and contemplation, rather than a systematic treatment of Mystical Theology by mystical authors.

ST. TERESA AND ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

The two greatest mystical writers in Spain, and perhaps in the whole world, were St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. A short account of their description of mystical states will be given here for two reasons. The first, because it affords an opportunity of speaking of these manifestations of Christian Sanctity, which, by their sublimity, will help us better to realize the excellence of the source whence they are derived.

The second, because in this manner we shall be able to judge between true and false mysticism—a matter of considerable importance nowadays when so many speak of mysticism and evince an interest in its experiences, though they loosely apply the word to hysterical phenomena, hypnotic facts, religious aspirations in general, asceticism, and finally—but almost unconsciously—to real mysticism.

St. Teresa confesses in her life (Chap. XVIII) that she writes of these matters "under obedience, and also with an ardent desire to captivate souls with the charms of so high a good."

I too, in inserting this chapter among these studies on Christian Sanctity, must own to an analogous desire. I write that those who may chance to read this book, *if they belong to the fold,* may increase in the love of prayer and of mortification, and thereby come nearer to the Lord, and taste how sweet are the waters springing from His side—*and if they are still wandering outside its enclosure,* I write that they may feel drawn to knock at the gate, and ask to catch a glimpse of its rich pastures, and insist with earnest humility to be allowed to enter and feed therein.

Famous is the simile used by St. Teresa in explaining the various phases or degrees of contemplative prayer. She writes: "He who would give himself to prayer ought to imagine that he

is undertaking to make a garden to please the Saviour's eyes out of a piece of ground which is sterile and covered with thorns. . . . .

"The plants must be most carefully watered. . . . There are, I think, four ways of watering a garden: *the first* is by drawing the water from a well by hand, and that means hard work: *the second* is by use of a *noria* (rope and bucket), and in this way more water is obtained with less labour; *the third* is by getting the water from a stream or rivulet, which is much better than either of the two preceding ways; the ground is more deeply soaked, and it is not necessary to water it so often, and the gardener has far less toil; lastly, *the fourth* and the best of all is an abundance of rain, since then God takes it upon Himself to water the garden without the least labour on our part. . . . In this way I trust I may succeed in giving you some idea of the four degrees of prayer to which the Lord in His goodness has sometimes been pleased to raise my soul." (Life, Chap. XI).

So St. Teresa distinguishes four degrees of contemplation according to the varying amount of activity one finds in it. The first three degrees indicate a state in which the soul is still active, the last comprises a state of passivity. There indeed we can say with the Pseudo Areopagite that the soul "*patitur divina*."

PREPARATION. In order to enter on the path of Mysticism the soul must constantly endeavour to practise the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, and all the moral virtues, befitting one's state in life. No control of respiration here, as we find enjoined in the *Hatha-Yoga*, no pressing of the tongue against the palate, no special posture of the body, no holding of the toes in a peculiar manner, no nauseating washings, and fixing the gaze on the tip of the nose. Such mechanical devices may indeed produce a kind of stupor, or hypnotic state—never the mystical state of union with God. They have been devised by people who still seek admiration in apparent death and burial, and in provoked resurrections. The Christian Mystic will have nothing to do with them. He endeavours to

live in God's grace, to correspond to the faintest movements and inspirations of the Holy Ghost, hoping for "some of the crumbs which fall from the table of His Master."

FIRST STEP — WITHDRAWAL AND RECOLLECTION. Relying on God's ordinary assistance, and faithfully co-operating with it (*St. Teresa, The Way of Perfection*, Chap. XXXI), the soul strives to withdraw from all external things, to enter into itself with God, therein to listen to the divine instructions. Like the bees who enter into the hive to make honey, the soul shuts itself in with its beloved and lovingly waits on Him (Ib. XXX). No need of withdrawing into dim places, of endeavouring to close one's eyes. For "one's eyes close of their own accord, and one instinctively tries to be alone." (*The Interior Castle*, IV Mansion, Chap. III). "In this state, one does not lose the use of any of one's powers; one retains it in full, but only to busy oneself with God.... From this recollection sometimes arise both quiet and delightful peace." (*II Relation to Fr. Alvarez by St. Teresa*).

Here the state of passivity has begun; the garden is not watered by the hand, or with the *noria*. Such methods belong rather to ordinary meditation. The waters here are derived from a rivulet, and sink deep into the soil.

SECOND STEP—QUIET AND REPOSE—The soul in this state enjoys such quiet and delightful peace, as to wish for nothing but love. It becomes so gently attentive to the whisperings of its Well-Beloved, that the attention seems hardly to be conscious, and its repose is as tranquil as that of a child in the arms of its mother. "The powers are almost entirely united with God, but they are not so far lost in Him as to cease all activity." (Life, Chap. XVI).

It is chiefly the will that is "caught" by the divine presence; intellect and memory are still free, and at times they escape and "go after strange and unprofitable thoughts."

Let us quote one at least of the many descriptions of this state given by St. Teresa:

"The great God desires the soul to understand that He is near it, and that it can therefore speak to Him without needing any intermediaries and without raising its voice, because He is so near as to hear the least motion of the lips. Such language as this may seem strange; for do we not know that God always hears us since He is always with us? But here our Sovereign, our adorable Master wishes us to know that He is listening to us, and that we are experiencing the effects of His presence. He makes plain His design of operating in a special manner in our soul by pouring into it a great interior and exterior satisfaction, which is infinitely different from all the vain pleasures of this world; and thus He seems to fill the void created by our sins. The soul relishes this peace in its inmost depths, but without knowing how or whence it is received. In this state it is often unaware of what it ought to do or desire or ask for. It feels as if it had found all it could wish for, but it knows not what it has found, and I own I am unable to impart the understanding of it." (Life, Chap. XIV).

So, in this second state of prayer, it is chiefly the will that is immersed in God, that is "caught" up by the divine presence. As I have remarked above, the memory, the understanding and the imagination are free, and sometimes they even run after unprofitable thoughts and images.

Oftener, however, they can be controlled, and then short prayers can be offered up to God, distinct acts and promises of fidelity can be elicited, thanks can be rendered for benefits received. In fact in the exuberance of love, hymns are at times composed, and even sung, in a kind of divine inebriation.

This, however, is very often followed by what may be described as a state of stupefaction, when the soul is overwhelmed; and gradually finds itself in what the mystics describe as a "*captivated*" condition, or "*silent*" quiet.

There is then a sort of "*wondering*" quiet and of "*silent*" repose. But it is especially during the former state that the soul experiences the *pains* and *sufferings* of contemplation. By these sufferings we are not to understand the crosses which the good God often deigns to send to His elect; nor the intense feelings of compassion, which one may experience when contemplating the Passion of Christ; nor the sorrow and contrition we may feel for sin.

These sufferings are different and more terrible. St. John of the Cross calls them "*the obscure night;*" and it is well to allow him to describe them for us.

"This night," he writes, "produces in spiritual men two sorts of darkness or purgations, conformable to the two divisions of man's nature into sensitive and spiritual.

Thus one night, or sensitive purgation, wherein the soul is purified and detached, will be of the senses, harmonizing them with the spirit. The other is that night or spiritual purgation wherein the soul is purified or detached in the spirit, and which harmonizes and disposes the soul for union with God in love.

The sensitive night is common, and the lot of many.... The spiritual night is the portion of very few; and they are those who have made some progress.... The first night, or purgation, is bitter and terrible to the senses. The second is not to be compared with it, for it is much more awful to the spirit." (*The Obscure Night of the Soul*, Book I, Chap. VIII).

From these words, and from the descriptions which the Saint gives, it appears that the night of the soul is more in the nature of a psychological necessity, than of an actual trial, meant as such by God Almighty. The "night" both in the case of the beginners, and of those who are more advanced, seems to arise from a want of proportion between the nature of God's communications in prayer, and the weakness, and frailty of the human soul. The soul is frightened, as it were, by the abyss which is

suddenly opened before it; it feels uneasy; it doubts the origin of such novel experiences; it is dazzled, and almost blinded by the intensity of the divine light. This is made clear by these words of St. John of the Cross: "When the divine light of contemplation shines into the soul not yet perfectly enlightened, it causes spiritual darkness, because it not only surpasses its strength, but because it obscures it and deprives it of its natural perceptions. It is for this reason that St. Dionysius and other mystic theologians call infused contemplations *a ray of* darkness, that is for the unenlightened and unpurified soul." (Ibid. Chap. V).

But this darkness is not unrelieved and uninterrupted. The Beloved visits his bride with great tenderness, and this consolation is in proportion to the darkness and emptiness of the soul.

"These divine rays strike the soul so profoundly and so vividly, that it is rapt into an ecstasy, which in the beginning is attended with great physical suffering and natural fear." (*A Spiritual Canticle*, p. 68).

These ecstasies are usually the prelude to the "*Spiritual Espousals*," when "the soul not only ceases from its anxieties and loving complaints, but is, moreover, adorned with all grace, entering into a state of peace and delight, and of the sweetness of love." (Ib. p. 74).

Then the wounds of love are healed, as it were, or made so pleasing "that all those who experience them consent thereto and would not change their pain for all the sweetness of the universe." (*St. Francis de Sales — On the Love of God*, Book VI, Chap. XIV).

THIRD STEP—UNION AND SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE. From the writings of St. Teresa three chief characteristics of the state of union can be indicated.

The first is that of *complete passivity*, when "the soul is absorbed in enjoyment, without understanding what it enjoys....

when it is so united with God, that it cannot be occupied with anything else, even if it wished to do so .... here all the powers lose their natural activity, and are so far suspended that they are absolutely unconscious of their own operations." (Life, Chap. XVIII). "The understanding is as it were, stupefied by what it contemplates; the will loves more than the understanding can conceive .... the memory then is as it were non-existent, and so is the imagination .... and as to the senses, one would think that they are lost .... in order that the soul may more closely belong to the divine object of its enjoyment." (Chap. XVIII).

The second mark is the *feeling of the presence of God within the soul,* when "the soul has not even to swallow the divine food; but it is God who imparts it to one inwardly, one knows not how" .... when the soul "understands, but otherwise than by means of the external senses, that it is near its God, and that if it were to approach a little nearer, it would become one with Him by means of union." (Life, Chap. XVIII).

The third characteristic refers to the *certainty* which the soul has after contemplation, that *it was with God.* During contemplation "it neither sees, nor hears, nor understands .... this time, however lasts but a little while, and seems even shorter than it is. God Himself settles within the soul in such a way that when it comes to itself again, it cannot doubt but that it has been in God and God in it." (*The Interior Castle,* V. Mansion, Chap. I).

These are, as it were, the *internal* effects of union. As to its external effects, they are thus described by St. Teresa:

"While seeking God, the soul feels a very keen and delightful sense of entirely fainting away; it falls into a sort of swoon, in which the body gradually loses its breath and all its powers. It cannot make the slightest motion of the hands without the greatest and most painful effort. The eyes close involuntarily; and if they remain open, hardly anything can be

seen. It is incapable of reading, even if it would do so; letters are discernible, but since the mind is inactive, they can neither be distinguished nor co-ordinated. If anyone speaks to one, the voice is audible, but what is heard is unintelligible. . . . One tries to speak in vain, because one can neither frame nor utter a single word." (Life, Chap. XVIII).

Now all this applies with greater truth to that wonderful state which is called *ecstasy*.

Both the exterior and interior senses are bound; the sense of God's presence is more vivid, and the soul feels *the contact* of God.

St. John of the Cross speaks of it in *The Living Flame of Love* (Stanza II):

" What the soul tastes now in this *touch* of God, is, in truth, though not perfectly, a certain foretaste of everlasting life. It is not incredible that it should be so when we believe, as we do believe, that this touch is substantial, so that *the substance of God touches the substance of the soul*. Many saints have experienced it in this life. The sweetness of delight which this touch occasions baffles all description. Neither will I speak of it, lest men should suppose that it is nothing beyond what my words imply, for there are no terms by which we can designate or explain the deep things of God transacted in perfect souls. The language that befits these things is: Let him who has been favoured with them judge of them by himself, feel them and enjoy them, and be silent about them."

Thus the union or *Spiritual Marriage* of the soul with God is accomplished and maintained. It is by an analogy with the union of unsullied love between husband and wife, that the Saints attempt, in the language of Scripture, to give us an idea of the intimacy to which God often elevates pure souls.

In such a state there is no stopping of the breath, no rigidity of the body, no dislocation of the bones, as happens

sometimes in ecstasy and rapture. In the perfect "these raptures and physical sufferings have no place, for they enjoy liberty of spirit with unclouded unsuspended senses." (*The Obscure Night*, Book II, Chap. I).

"For God begins now to communicate Himself no longer through the channel of the senses as He did formerly, in consecutive reflections... but *in pure spirit*, which admits not of successive ideas, and in an act of pure contemplation to which neither the interior, nor the exterior senses of our lower nature can ascend." (Ibid. Book I, Chap. IX).

"Just as the fire which ultimately penetrates the substance of the fuel is the very same which in the beginning darted its flames around it, playing about it, and depriving it of its coldness until it prepared it with its heat for its own entrance into it, and transformation of it into itself," so the flame of God's love, that finally accomplishes the intimate union of God with the soul, so that, in a sense, they are "two in one spirit," is the same which before enveloped it and purified it. (Cfr. *The Living Flame of Love*, Stanza 1). Now there follows *absolute detachment* from the things of the world, now the body is in entire harmony with the spirit, and the spirit with God. "The whole substance of the soul is now so occupied with God so intent upon Him, that its very first movements, even inadvertently, have God for their object and their end. The intellect, memory and will tend directly to God; the affections, senses, desires and longings, hope and joy, the whole substance of the soul, rise instantly towards God, though the soul is not making any conscious efforts in that direction. Such a soul as this does continually the work of God, is intent upon Him and His works, without thinking or reflecting on what it is doing for Him. The constant and habitual practice of this has suppressed all conscious reflection, and even those acts of fervour also which were present to it in the beginning of its conversion." (*A Spiritual Canticle*, Stanza XXVIII). Thus *Spiritual Marriage* differs from the

Espousals and *Prayer of Union*, for in it the union seems to be *constant and permanent*, whilst many separations occur in the latter states. Also the soul is sure that what occurs in it comes from God.

"A waterfall cannot be explained without a spring, nor can the soul explain what takes place inwardly without God. It perceives clearly that God within it is piercing it with the arrows with which it is wounded; that He is life, and that He is the sun, the light of which, arising from within, is shed upon all its powers." (*The interior Castle*, VII Mansion, Chap. II).

"The movements of the flame, that is its vibrations and its flickerings, are not the work af the soul only, transformed in the fire of the Holy Ghost, nor of the Holy Ghost only, but of the soul and the Holy Ghost together, who moves the soul as the fire moves the air that is burning. Thus then these motions of God and of the soul together are as it were the acts of God by which He renders the soul glorious." (*The Living Flame of Love, Stanza* III).

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APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XII

EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER OF CHRISTIAN MIRACLES

Mystical phenomena being strictly connected with miracles, it is well to say here a few words on the latter, which, like the former, are one of the brightest manifestations and signs of Christian Sanctity. It would be wrong, however, to make a sharp distinction between the two, for they naturally merge one into the other.

The Prophet Joel attributes them explicitly to the Holy Ghost, and, speaking chiefly of mystical manifestations, mentions them as one of the characteristics of the days following the messianic advent. "And it shall come to pass after this, that I will pour my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Moreover upon my servants and handmaidens in those days I will pour forth my spirit." (II, 28). The same Spirit dwells within the souls of those who fear the Lord, and elevates them from illumination to illumination to a likeness of God, thus preparing in this life that image of His Glory, into which they will be transformed in heaven.

Miracles, in general, that is to say, both those affecting lower nature, and those more strictly mystical, which take place within the spirit, but at the same time overflow its boundaries, are an incontrovertible proof of the divinity of the Church. For, as the Word made flesh possessed these gifts, and by them proved His divine mission, so also His Mystical Body is favoured in the same manner, and is glorified in the eyes of the world. This is according to the promise of the Lord, who, being "taken up into heaven" said: "And these signs shall follow them that believe:

In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover." (Mark XVI).

In this Appendix I shall speak of the miracles which take place in the Catholic Church, not by way of metaphysical discussions, but rather confining myself to facts. Since the preceding chapter deals exclusively with Mysticism, one might expect here some remarks on miracles chiefly regarded as mystical manifestations. Indeed, I shall endeavour to do so, but before that, I do not think it altogether out of place to speak of miracles in the ordinary sense of the word, as they are understood by the majority of the faithful. From this not very abstract and remote angle of vision, miracles can be roughly divided into two kinds, not, of course, as regards their nature, but only with respect to their immediate origin: the first are connected with places, the second with persons.

MIRACLES CONNECTED WITH PLACES

The places, famous in the Catholic World for extraordinary manifestations of the Mercy of God, or the kindness of His Divine Mother and of the Saints, are very numerous. My purpose, however, will be fulfilled, if I mention only two, though different in character and fame.

The first is *Lourdes*, well known the world over. The concourse of people to the Grotto of Massabielle, began, soon after the Apparition of our Lady to a humble girl, Bernadette Soubirous, in 1858. Fifty years after, by the end of 1908, 5,297 pilgrimages, from France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, England, America etc., had been registered, which had brought to the little town among the Pyrenees, 4,919,000 pilgrims. Leaving aside the spiritual miracles, which are not less real, and often more wonderful than corporal cures, *Bertrin*, who has made a special study of the miraculous happenings at this shrine, says

that "the estimate that about 4,000 cures have been obtained at Lourdes within the first fifty years of the pilgrimage, is considerably less than the actual number." These do not occur in the dark; all can see them, who care to go to Lourdes, and examine things for themselves. From two to three hundred Physicians go annually to this place, and near the shrine there is the *Bureau des Constatations* where are recorded and checked the certificates of maladies, and also the certificates of cures. Since nervous disorders are often mentioned in this connection by sceptics and unbelievers, it is good to know that the cases which have been counted in fifty years are only 278 out of a total of 3,962 cures. The famous Dr. Ch. Richet, of the Medical Faculty of Paris, on reading an account of the cures from tuberculosis, tumors, sores, cancers, blindness etc. written by Bertrin, said: "On reading it, unprejudiced minds cannot but be convinced that the facts stated are authentic."

As to the cause of these phenomena, many suggestions have been made, and *first* the natural properties of the water, in which the patients are bathed. But, besides the fact that many are cured even though they do not bathe in the water, this, having been carefully tested, has been found to contain no special curative properties. *Others* have suggested that the changes in temperature to which the body is subjected in bathing, may perhaps account for the restoration of health. Well, it is strange that such changes should often cure cancers and sores and blindness at Lourdes, and not elsewhere; and that the cures should be sudden and permanent. *Others* again think that psychological suggestion is responsible for the so-called miracles. But Dr. Bernheim, a Jew, head of the Great School of Nancy, answers that suggestion is useless in the case of organic diseases, and even in nervous diseases, where it may have a chance of success, its cures are never instantaneous as they are at Lourdes. *The opinion* that perhaps some occult Law of Nature may be at work here is the last defence behind which Rationalists entrench themselves. It is to be remarked, however, that, since in many

of the cures *new* tissues are restored, which imply the growth of cells, which in the present cases *are lacking*, such an occult law cannot belong to the actual creation. To find a place for it a new world is required, created on a different plan.

The conclusion is that, no natural cause being found capable of accounting for the miracles at Lourdes, we must recognize the intervention of God, who, through His Immaculate Mother, wishes to glorify the Church, and to manifest her truth and sanctity by these wonderful works. (Cfr. *Cath. Ency.*: Article on Lourdes).

Of miracles connected with places in the Catholic Church I shall give another instance of a different character, which, however, is not so well known as it deserves to be. I mean the "*Piccola Casa della Divina Provvidenza*, or "*Little House of Divine Providence*," which a humble priest — Blessed Cottolengo— founded in Turin in 1828. It is called "*Piccola*" or "*small*," not because it is really small, as human standards go, for it houses nearly ten thousand people, but because, its head and father being God Himself, it is surely small when compared with the immensity of His love. This house, which is unique in the world, embraces forty religious communities, each with its chapel, its refectory, dormitory, halls and gardens. Their chief work is to attend to the needs of thousands of sick people, of all conditions, of all countries, of all ages. Some fifty doctors tend the sick, and direct the charity of hundreds of Virgins, who have dedicated their lives to the relief of human misery. In this house one finds all sorts of diseases, passing and chronic, nervous and organic. Here are sheltered helpless old men and women, deserted children, homeless girls. They all find care, help, protection and love.

The miraculous character of the "*Piccola Casa*" is that it is based entirely on faith in Divine Providence. The men who direct it do not seek, demand, and still less provoke, the help of their fellow-citizens. They rely on Divine Providence, who, in

one hundred years, has never failed them. The only thing that is tolerated, in case of extraordinary distress, is to manifest the circumstances to some good people, without, however, asking for help. And if the House is enriched by donations and legacies, they cannot be capitalized, but must be converted into cash, to meet the immediate needs of the Institution. The words of Blessed Cottolengo are very clear and to the point: "Whatever comes in for the poor, must immediately go out in order to provide for their maintenance. If, on the contrary, we keep silver and gold, Divine Providence, knowing that we possess something, will send us nothing more. The ways of God are not our ways. He sends us food, clothing, money and strength. We, that are his own poor, have to spend all joyously, without thinking of the morrow, or of the day after to-morrow. The Divine Providence of to-morrow, and next week and of the future years, is the same as that of to-day. Consequently, we need not fear. Let us put all our trust in God." This is surely not the prudence of the world; but it is the prudence of Him who said: "Be not solicitous saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed?... For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. VI).

Some, however, may think that this straight appeal to the Supernatural is far too simple, when it is offered as an explanation of a fact which is not in the clouds but in our midst, which is not a vague metaphysical principle, but stubborn, insistent and not to be easily reasoned out of court. For surely the daily feeding, and clothing, and sheltering, and tending, and helping in a thousand ways ten thousand persons in such. But, inquire, as you wish, no other explanation is adequate. If you enter the "*Piccola Casa*" and pry into its secret workings, organization and wonderful stability, you will certainly be illumined; and finally, after all your searchings, you will come to the conclusion which many another before you was forced to reach, that human

explanation of such an institution simply do not exist. If you ask the priests who go there every day to exercise their sacred ministry; or the noble ladies and gentlemen, who ask it as a favour to be allowed to serve the sick; or the doctors, who offer the fruit of their studies for the help of the poor; or the poor themselves, the blind, the cripples, the consumptives .... they will all tell you: "It is the Providence of God."

And the supernatural character of the Institution comes out most clearly when we visit its Church and its numerous chapels. There the noise of work, the laments of the sick, the joyful cries of the children are all hushed up in the silent prayers that are constantly offered up to God. Really from the "*Piccola Casa*" a perennial cloud of prayerful incense rises up to God Almighty, and descends again upon the earth transformed into a shower of benediction. In the words of Blessed Cottolengo: "One of the main wheels which carry on this institution is prayer. This must never be diminished, not even by an "*Ave Maria*," but it must on the contrary be developed more and more, if that be possible."

MIRACLES CONNECTED WITH PERSONS

Just as the miracles directly connected with places are numerous in the Catholic Church, so, and perhaps more, numerous are the miracles connected with persons. Of these thus speaks the Pontiff Gregory the Great in one of his letters to St. Augustine of Canterbury: "There are corporal miracles and spiritual miracles. The former, though they are a witness to sanctity, do not create it; the latter, which take place in the interior of the soul, are not exterior witnesses to a virtuous life, but they create it. The wicked may attain to the former; the latter can be enjoyed by the good alone. Therefore, dear brethren, do not attach value to that which we share with the lost, but love those other miracles of charity and piety of which I have told you. They are the more safe as they are the more hidden, and they are

the more rewarded by God because they serve less to win us glory from men."

This doctrine, which is but an echo of the teaching of St. Paul, is the foundation of the distinction, current in Catholic Theology, of *gratiae gratis datae* et *gratiae gratum facientes*. Though miracles do belong to the former category, still they are the usual mark and adornment of heroic sanctity, that is to say, of the outpourings of grace which make a soul most pleasing to God.

Certainly we do not vouch for the truth of all the extraordinary phenomena one reads of in the Lives of the Saints, yet to deny them all is to deny Christian History, and is tantamount to making the development of the Church wholly unintelligible.

Just as with respect to the miracles of Jesus, "if excision be made from the Evangelic records (1) of all that *directly narrates* his unique action as a healer and wonder-worker, (2) of all that *presupposes* the possibility and actuality of such a unique action, (3) of all that *testifies* to His authority and power due to a unique relation to God — the Gospels are left bald and bare and mutilated beyond description; the very warp and woof of the fabric is destroyed" (Wright), so with regard to the miracles which take place, and have always taken place, in the Church; "the very warp and woof of the fabric" of such an institution is destroyed, if they are *all* denied and rejected. Those who attribute all her miracles to the inventions of a credulous or deceitful age, are in no better position than those who attribute Christ's miracles to the conscious or unconscious fabrications of the Apostles. For, many miracles of the Church, as the miracles related in the Gospels, *took place in the full light of day*, and could easily be verified by hundreds of eye-witnesses. Many miracles in the History of the Church, as the miracles of Christ, *are testified by persons absolutely beyond suspicion*, whose high moral character and veracity are unimpeachable, who often had nothing to gain from their assertions, but rather had much to lose.

Again, many miracles in the History of the Church present the same characters as the miracles of our Lord. They are *spontaneous*, and not carefully prepared beforehand, as is so often the case in spiritualistic circles. Their *object* is usually very noble and morally high. They are never performed *to please the populace*, or to satisfy idle curiosity. But a miracle is often worked to confirm the teaching of the Church, to console a poor sick person, to confound the heretics, to punish the sinners. Our Lord often desired that His miracles *should not be divulged*; and the Saints love to be overlooked, and never seek publicity. There is, however, this fundamental difference between the miracles of Christ and the miracles of His servants, that *Christ's power was limited merely from within*, by His Divine Wisdom, whilst *the Saints know that the extraordinary powers which they possess do not obey their will*, but only the Will of the Almighty, who has chosen them to be His live instruments for the manifestation of His glory.

This is well illustrated in the following episode which can be read in the Life of St. Bernard (by the Abbé Vacandard, Vol. II, p. 232): "One dark thought tormented him, and that was the recollection of the miracles he had worked. At last he spoke out to his travelling companions: 'How can it be,' he said, 'that God should use such a man as I am, to work these wonders? Generally speaking, real miracles are worked by great Saints false miracles by hypocrites. It seems to me that I am neither the one nor the other.' Nobody dared give him the answer that was in the minds of all, for fear of offending his modesty. All at once the answer to the riddle seemed to strike him. 'I see,' he said, 'miracles are not a proof of sanctity, they are a means of gaining souls. God worked them, not to glorify me, but for the edification of my neighbour. Therefore miracles and I have nothing in common with one another.'"

This testimony, and the words of St. Gregory which I have quoted above, seem to contradict my statement, that

miracles are an ornament to sanctity, and usually accompany holiness and manifest it. But it is not so; for the words merely put us on our guard against possible forgeries of God's own seal, as the miracles may be called, and reveal the attitude of the Saints, who were endowed with thaumaturgic powers—*an attitude of humility,* of real consciousness of their unworthiness, of fear to be the victims of the devil or of their own imagination, and, at the same time, a lively *faith* that whatever is extraordinary and supernatural in their action comes from God. Hence there is a *dignity and nobility* in their miracles, which recalls the dignity of the miracles of Jesus Himself, and which is one of the clearest marks of their divine origin. This, coupled with the *piety and religion* with which the wonders are worked, distinguishes them from other wonders which are related in many human religions, like Hinduism, Mahomedanism and the like. Besides, the *serene simplicity* of the words used, or of the means employed by the Saint, together with his absolute *unselfishness,* create in the mind a deep conviction that here we are in the presence of God Himself.

These remarks are chiefly applied to the so-called corporal miracles in the Church; yet they may be extended also to the more mystical and spiritual phenomena, which are frequently to be met with in the lives of the Saints. There too, the mystical state is a witness to sanctity, and sanctity in its turn, is a witness to the truth and divine origin of the mystical state.

Too easily have some Physiologists identified the latter with such neuropathic phenomena as mental hearing, second sight, clairvoyance, epilepsy, mesmeric behaviour and the like, for, neglecting to study the point deeply and with an unprejudiced mind, they have been led into error by a few superficial similarities, and hastily noted analogies. What should never be lost sight of in rightly appraising these facts is first of all the *nature and character* of the person in whom they occur. Whilst the Saint is detached from worldly things, is mortified

and obedient, neurotics are sometimes bad; and oftener, though we cannot positively describe them as bad, their character is inconstant, passionate, vain and cunning. They easily pass from love to hatred; they are led more by the imagination and feeling of the moment than by reason and by clearly organised supernatural principles. A consequence which arises from such a different moral background, is the *anxiety and fear* entertained by the Saints, in whom mystical manifestations do occur, which is in strong contrast with the eagerness, evinced by mediums, clairvoyants and such like, to show their extraordinary powers, and at times even to derive pecuniary advantage from them. The Saints, as we have seen in the case of St. Bernard, are anxious lest they should be the victims of their imagination, or of the devil. They seek advice, they pray that God may not allow them to be deluded. But no such things do occur among people whose nerves are shattered, or whose imagination is wild and unrestrained. If—as is not infrequently the case—they live in convents or religious houses, they are a plague to their confessors, whom they worry with scruples and interminable descriptions of their fanciful experiences; they are a worry to their Superiors, whom they often regard as their natural enemies and persecutors; and they are a real cross to the Community, from whose rules and common observances they constantly seek to be exempted.

It should also be remarked that when ecstasy, rapture, or other extraordinary manifestation takes place, the *external attitude* of the Saint is full of modesty and dignity. Though the senses are suspended, breathing is stopped, and the body is cold and rigid, the unseemly postures of the neurotic are excluded, the foaming and violent movements of the epileptic are absent, and the by-standers are filled with admiration and sentiments of humility and love for God Almighty. The more so, if, as it sometimes happens, the face is shining, and the body is raised from the ground. Phenomena of levitation do indeed occur even in spiritualistic séances, but what precedes, accompanies, and

follows them is so utterly different from the circumstances which surround such facts in a saint, that only prejudice, or a nature bent on distorting facts, can identify them with mystical manifestations.

If we *listen to the communications* made by mystics like St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, or St. Catherine of Siena, during their ecstasies, we find them full of wisdom and heavenly light. The latter during her ecstasy dictated her famous *Dialogue*, which overflows with love and supernatural wisdom; the letters which she wrote or caused to be written, during her raptures, are replete with intelligence, courage, and fervent piety. In one she treats of the duties of married people, in another of justice. Some are directed to the Pope, some to the Magistrates of Siena, whom she helped to extricate from the maze of political difficulties, in which her country and the Church were almost irretrievably entangled. Compare all this with the platitudes trivialities, fanciful, and sometimes bad and irreligious, utterances of hypnotic media, and you will not fail to discover where breathes the true spirit of God.

After a false ecstasy, the patient is usually *exhausted;* the nervous system, chiefly if the shocks are frequently repeated, is shattered, the imagination waxes stronger, reason becomes weaker and weaker, till at long last it gives way under the strain. The Saints knew these facts, carefully guarded themselves against them, and their experience was of help also to the poor victims of such disorders. Listen to St. Teresa speaking of this matter: "Directly these poor people experience a certain joy in their souls, their bodies became weak and faint .... They give way to a feeling of intoxication which increases as nature gets weaker and weaker. They persuade themselves that it is a rapture, but what they call a rapture is mere waste of time and health. I knew a person who remained in this state for eight hours. Her confessor and many other persons had been deceived .... But another person (i. e. the Saint herself), to whom God had given light, recognized the snare. Her advice was listened to, the

poor ecstatic was made to diminish her penances, to sleep more and eat more, and with the help of these remedies she was cured."

The Saints also do feel exhausted after an ecstasy; but their strength has not disappeared; it has, in a sense, been transformed. The body is weaker, but the spirit is stronger. Also the contrary sometimes happens; for, as St. Teresa informs us, "though the body is often infirm and full of suffering before ecstasy, it comes out of it full of health and admirably prepared for action." And this is another characteristic which distinguishes true from false Mystics:—that is the extraordinary *fruitfulness and fecundity* of the former, and the miserable sterility of the latter. As a matter of fact, I doubt whether there has ever been in the Catholic Church any great vocation, from the Apostles down to such leaders as St. Bernard, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Ignatius, St. Francis Xavier, St. Philip Neri, St. Teresa, St. Jane Frances de Chantal and many others, that was not accompanied by some higher form of Christian Mysticism. The nature and character of these leaders were certainly emotional, but if the emotions partially supplied the steam, they did not supply the directive activity required to carry on their enterprises. The latter came from their intelligence, illumined and comforted by the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. In fact, without a plenitude of divine light, without an extraordinary degree of faith and union with God, from which was derived their power over nature, and their ability to attract the confidence of men, I do not think it possible to explain their lives, and the success which accompanied their endeavours. It is patently absurd to describe such men as hysteric or deluded, chiefly when we bear in mind their singleness of purpose, their strength of will and the tenacity with which they strove to fulfil what they deemed to be their vocation, in the teeth of the craftiest opposition, and amidst difficulties which would have cooled the warmest enthusiasm.

Of course, not all the Mystics have had the opportunity of "bringing forth so much fruit," as the Saints I have mentioned

above. These shine like stars in the firmament of the Church; and their achievements, which, rather than a hindrance find an explanation in their mystic gifts, are the achievements of genius glorified by Sanctity. Not all the Mystics were geniuses; yet all found in Mysticism a higher unification and harmony of their faculties, a kind of transfiguration of their lower selves into nobler personalities, a widening of their mental horizon, a soaring above mundane things, like the soaring of an eagle. Mysticism then is the zenith of the spiritual life in this world; it brings home to us the supernatural character of Christianity; its summits are bathed in heavenly light, and from its heights it sheds streams of life, which reach to the very depths of the spirit.

Yet, just as a healthy mystical experience must be based on the true faith, and must sink its roots in charity, so a well balanced and harmonious study of mystical phenomena must be based on deep philosophical and theological knowledge, such as is supplied by the Catholic Church alone. No wonder then if such a profound scholar as A. Harnack wrote that "in order to be able to speak of mystical states one must be a Catholic, under pain of remaining for ever a mere dilettante." (*Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, III, p. 436). The Catholic Church supplies the proper atmosphere where alone true mysticism can develop and she supplies also the right principles according to which mystical phenomena are to be judged and distinguished from human perversions and illusions.

ATTITUDE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WITH RESPECT TO MIRACLES AND REVELATIONS

Yet some, even pious and good Catholics, look askance at Mysticism, on account of the frequent illusions which seem to accompany it, and there are even accusations against the Church, as if she were suspicious of, and almost unfavourable to, mystical manifestations. The extraordinary nature of the latter certainly calls for the exercise of watchfulness and prudence; for, (leaving

aside the frequent perversions of the truth which are due to the enthusiasm of writers, who seem to think they do honour to God by adorning with false embellishments real facts) the causes of error in this matter are many and not easily recognizable. The first is due to the fact that *human activity* is often *mingled* with the supernatural action during the mystical state. Preconceived ideas in matters doctrinal or historical, personal desires, strength of imagination and the like, may colour the divine light, chiefly when the lower faculties of the soul are not "bound." Hence, when the mystic claims a divine revelation of future events, or of past, but hidden, occurrences, the most careful discrimination is necessary. The more so that, to the first cause of error we have mentioned another must be added, and not less frequent. This consists in the *faulty interpretations* and involuntary modifications of the matter revealed, which are often due to the mystic himself. Examples of these are not lacking even in the lives of canonized saints.

Hence the answer of Pope Benedict XIV to the question "What is to be said of those private revelations which the Apostolic See has approved of?"—is worthy of notice. In his famous book on the Canonization of Saints (Eng. Trans. Vol. III. Chap. XIV), he says: "Such revelations, although approved of, ought not to, and cannot, receive from us any assent of catholic, but only of *human faith*, according to which the aforesaid revelations are *probable* and *piously to be believed*."

And Cardinal Pitra in the Book on St. Hildegard, p. xvi. writes: "Every one knows that we are fully at liberty to believe or not to believe in private revelations, even those most worthy of credence. Even when the Church approves them, they are merely received as probable, and not as indubitable. They are not to be used as deciding questions of history, natural

philosophy, or theology, which are matters of controversy among the Doctors. It is quite permissible to differ from these revelations, even when approved, if we are relying upon solid reasons, and especially if the contrary doctrine is proved by unimpeachable documents and definite experience."

Now, it seems to me that nothing more considerate and broadminded than this attitude towards mystical phenomena, can be desired. No Scepticism here, and no credulity either. Mystical states are admitted, but not as a source of revelation. The Church honours them, but does not yield up the exercise of prudence, and the right to estimate them at their proper value.

And what is said of mystical phenomena can be repeated of miracles in general. No blind admissions and no dogmatic denials; no easily duped credulity and no *a priori* scepticism.

The principle that God Almighty can, and often does, interfere with the Laws of the Universe according to the decrees of His Eternal Wisdom, is admitted—and how could it be otherwise?—but whether He has actually intervened in any particular instance is a matter to be decided by the ordinary rules of prudence and historical criticism. Yet, let us never forget the words: "Amen, I say to you, if you shall have faith, and stagger not... if you shall say to this mountain, take up and cast thyself into the sea, it shall be done." (Matt. XXI). The Saints had faith, and God rewarded them. Again, let us recall what Jesus said to Nathaniel: "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, thou believest; greater things than these thou shalt see.... Amen, amen, I say to you, you shall see the heaven opened, and the Angels of God, ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (John I). And indeed the Christian Mystics have seen the heaven opened, and the Angels of God

ascending and descending upon the Son of man, and upon His Holy Spouse, the Catholic Church.

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CHAPTER XIII

RELIGIOUS LIFE

(A)

THE ANCIENT MONASTIC ORDERS

Various theories have been advanced as to the origin of the Religious Life in the Catholic Church. Some have dreamed of possible Brahminic influences; others have sought for the precursors of the Christian Monks in the Essenes and Therapeuts described by Philo. But, barring superficial similarities, little else could they find to justify their contentions.

Catholics are commonly agreed that the germs of the Religious Life are to be found in the first followers of our Lord, who, having left their families, devoted themselves to God's service and the preaching of the Gospel. The "*Counsels of Perfection*," which are the foundation of all Religious Orders, are clearly formulated by our Lord in Chapter XIX of St. Matthew, where He speaks of chastity practised voluntarily for the love of God, and of poverty, and of a life spent in the following of Jesus. During the lifetime of the Apostles, and after them, there were many in the Church desirous to live a life of perfection. They endeavoured to practise chastity, either in their homes, or in solitude, or again in special houses; and often dressed in a peculiar manner. Origen was one of them; Hierakas, a Doctor of the Church of Alexandria, lived in community with them, the holy Bishop Narcissus had long practised penance in the desert before being chosen to the See of Jerusalem; St. Paul lived in solitude for ninety years; and St. Anthony became the father of hermits and anchorites. Virgins too consecrated themselves to God from the earliest times, cut their hair, and wore the veil and a modest habit, made of very common stuff.

But the Founder of the strictly coenobitic life was *St. Pachomius* who, at Tabenna, in Egypt, instituted the first Monastery and gave the Monks a proper habit and a common rule. In the fifth century the number of Religious following the Rule of St. Pachomius was very great; and besides these, there were convents for women, ruled by a Mother, called Ammas.

The second great Founder of Religious Communities in the East was *St. Basil*, who insisted chiefly on the virtue of obedience; so that, if by the vow of poverty the Religious offers to God the sacrifice of his possessions, and by the vow of chastity the sacrifice of his body and of his earthly love, by the vow of obedience the holocaust is made complete by the offering up of his will, which is the noblest part of man.

It was ST. ATHANASIUS, the great persecuted Bishop of Alexandria, who made the monastic life known in the West. Soon there arose many Monasteries, chiefly in Rome, where St. Jerome worked strenuously to establish them. One was founded also in Milan by St. Ambrose; St. Martin opened Monasteries at Tours and Poitiers; and at the close of the fourth century there were over 2,000 Monks in Gaul alone.

But the Patriarch of the Monks, and the real organizer of religious life in Europe was ST. BENEDICT (490-543), the young solitary of Subiaco, and the founder of what he called "*The Way of Life,*" in Monte Cassino. His Rule brought unity and order to the Monks of the West; obliged them to poverty, chastity and obedience; prescribed meditation, the singing of the Divine Office and manual work, or study, as their chief occupations. After one year of Novitiate they had to take their vows, to which a fourth was added—*stabilitas loci*—which would prevent dangerous wanderings, and would ensure a homely spirit among them. The Monks soon spread through the West, usually exempted from the interference of Bishops, and protected by Rome, who, found in them most trusty auxiliaries in her battles for the reformation of morals, in her

endeavours to curb the overbearing spirit of Princes and Kings, and in her epic fight against the vices of the Clergy, chief among them concubinage and simony. With Monte Cassino we remember Cluny, Corbie, Marmoutier, and a hundred other Abbeys, from which the praises of God were sung day and night, and at the same time the germs of a new civilization were fecundated.

OF ST. ROMUALD—the founder of Camaldoli—we read that he was "*impatiens sterilitatis.*" He could not bear barrennes and sterility, not merely in the soul of his Monks, but also in the lands which surrounded his Monastery. He succeeded in having his hermitage "by a thousand firs one thousand times encircled," and what was accomplished in Camaldoli, now one of the loveliest spots of Italy, was done throughout the length and breadth of Europe. Whilst men clad in iron were wantonly destroying one another, the silent Monks, obeying their motto *Ora et Labora* were cultivating lands, planning irrigation works, drying marshy places, and bringing wealth and peace to the very feet of the hills, which were crowned with forbidding castles. When in Europe scarcely any nobleman could write his own name, the Sons of St. Benedict were quietly training themselves to the love of Truth and Beauty, were silently joining in indissoluble bonds Roman and Christian Civilization. Desiderius of Monte Cassino, in the eleventh century, was calling to the fortress-like Abbey painters and sculptors from Greece, mosaic workers from Rome, architects from every part of Italy, and was raising a Basilica that was to be a fair prelude to Santa Maria del Fiore. Whilst the fight for Investitures was raging, Leo of the Marsians was writing the Chronicle of his times; Constantine of Africa handed down to posterity the wisdom of Hippocrates and Galenus; Alfanus of Salerno was quaintly traing his ear to the harmonies of Horace and Virgil. Thus these "contemplative flames" as Dante called them, not merely kept "the point of the spirit" constantly directed to heaven, but looked also on earth, and pacified the

ferocity of man, enkindled the fire of art, and steadily promoted the progress of agriculture.

We so often speak nowadays of unions and associations which spring up everywhere, though they are not cemented by a common faith, often lack a directive authority, are brought together without wise regulations or previous training and spirit of sacrifice. What are they in comparison with the Catholic Brotherhoods, which have done so much good in the world? They are made to day, and to-morrow they are dissolved; they ebb and flow like the waves of the sea; whilst the religious Communities have defied the disintegrating action of centuries, and have withstood the persecution of tyrants; if cut down, they sprout again; if uprooted in one place, they germinate in another. Sometimes one hears people talking of their scandals, their laziness, their gluttony. Scandals indeed! As if it could be otherwise among human beings, numbering hundreds of thousands! The Sons of St. Benedict are like a gigantic mountain-range rising in the serene atmosphere, its head above the clouds and the storms—solid, majestic, immovable. And the scandals among them are like pebbles, or even rocks, which detach themselves now and again from the great mass, and roll down the valleys and into the plains below. What is that to a mountain? Can that destroy its solidity or even mar its beauty?

So great is the work for the civilization and sanctification of mankind which has been done by the ancient Monks, that Pope Pius XI did not doubt to write the famous words: "*Si unquam alias tales in Ecclesia esse Anachoretas oportuit, at potissimum hodie esse ac vigere oportet.*" "If at any other time it was necessary to have these men of God living in solitude, it is chiefly necessary nowadays that they should exist and prosper amongst us." (*Acta Ap. Sedis*, 15 Oct., 1924, p. 388). For though they do not contribute directly and by the institution of their Rule to the progress of Society, they do so by their

prayers, their vows, their spirit of sacrifice. They are an undying witness to the nobility of the spirit, they constantly remind us of the great supernatural realities, and they atone with their penance for our crimes.

F. Ozanam, the Founder of the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, after having been present at the Divine Service held during the night at *La Grande Chartreuse*, wrote: "I thought of all the crimes which are committed at that hour in our great cities; and I asked myself if indeed the expiation is sufficient to wash away so many iniquities."

St. Thomas Aquinas writes in the 2nd Part of the Summa (2a, 2ae, q. 180 etc.): "As it is a greater thing to be enlightened and to enlighten, than merely to be enlightened, so it is a greater thing to communicate to others the contemplated truth, than merely to contemplate." This principle, so simple and yet so beautiful, is the corner stone of the Religious Orders which live a mixed life. Though the Benedictine Families have never been entirely foreign to it, one may say that their chief object was individual, rather than social sanctification. "*O beata solitudo, O sola beatitudo,*" still remained their motto, and the quaint pun "*Cella, coelum*" was their ideal.

The *Canons Regular*, so famous in the Middle Ages, were among the first to insert in their Rules, besides penance and contemplation, the preaching of the word of God, the care of souls and the study of the sacred sciences. The Benedictines elevated man's thoughts to God by the holiness of their lives and the grandeur of their liturgical offices. The action of the Canons Regular was more direct and immediate. We leave out the *Military Orders*, whose object was almost wholly active, as the armed defence of helpless pilgrims and the war against the Infidels. Mention, however, must be made in this connection of the "*Order of our Lady of Ransom*," whose members, besides the three ordinary vows common to all Religious, took the heroic vow of substituting themselves for a poor slave, fallen

into the hands of the Saracens, in case his eternal salvation were endangered. The chief scope of these institutions having ceased to exist, they too gradually dwindled in numbers, till now they are either extinct or reduced to a few hundreds.

(B)

THE MENDICANT ORDERS

But it is otherwise with the two great *Mendicant Orders* of St. Francis of Assisi and of St. Dominic. The first was rapidly propagated, and its spirit renewed the face of Europe. It worked among all classes, but mainly with the poor, whom it reached both directly through indefatigable preachers and workers, and indirectly through the institution of the *Third Order*.

The mysterious cry "Peace and Goodwill" "Peace and Goodwill" which in the year of the birth of St. Francis had often roused the citizens of Assisi from sleep, or surprised them in the early morning was coming true. To quote the words of the Saint's first biographer—not only were the two great Orders of Francis and Clare rising up "like a noble house of love in which living stones, gathered from all the world, were built up into a habitation of the Holy Spirit," but through the Third Order "a new militia of Christ" spread over Europe, bringing peace and goodwill among lords and serfs, and uniting rich and poor in the sweet bonds of love.

The picture that is often formed of St. Francis is of an unearthly Saint, charming and poetical, but far too mystical to be of great use to this matter-of-fact world of ours. Perhaps he could have accomplished the building of the little chapel of San Damiano; but as to the "rebuilding of the House of God," his wounded hands seemed hardly fit for the toil. And yet it was this Saint, the Mystic Contemplative of Mount Alvernia, who, together with Cardinal Ugolino, inflamed his

followers with a burning love for "Lady Poverty," and formed the Third Order, which counts even now some three million members, and which has sheltered within its broad aisles some of the greatest men in history. Its Rules are so practical and to the point, that it will be worthwhile to mention them here.

The conditions of admission into the Third Order are: (1) The restoration of ill-gotten goods; (2) Reconciliation with enemies; (3) Observance of the Commandments of God, the Precepts of the Church and the Rule; (4) No heretic, or anyone suspected of heresy can be received, and married women, only with the consent of their husbands. The first chapter prescribes simplicity in dress; the sixth forbids the carrying of arms or taking solemn oaths without necessity; and the tenth orders that everyone should make his last will three months after his reception; that dissensions among brothers and sisters or other persons are to be settled peaceably; and if troubles arise with local authorities, the Ministers of the Order ought to act with the counsel of the Bishop.

Thus the Sanctity of Christ is brought and spread among all the various orders of Society, and the evils which were disfiguring the Middle Ages are most efficiently counteracted.

The First and Second Orders of St. Francis have been compared to two mighty rivers which, flowing down from the snow-capped mountains, bring wealth to the plains among which their course lies. But one ventures to suggest that their fertilizing waters could not have reached so far, nor could have penetrated so deep into the Christian soil, had it not been for the Third Order, which, like a well-planned net of irrigation canals, has carried the waters of grace to the remotest corners of Christ's Vineyard.

It is related that in 1264, scarcely forty years from their foundation, the Franciscans numbered already eight thousand convents, and not less than 200,000 Friars. This prodigious

development shows that the Order satisfied the great need the faithful stood in of spiritual leaders filled with Spirit of Christ. In fact, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Secular Clergy, in spite of the reforms initiated by Gregory VII, was too much occupied with temporal matters to devote much time to the spiritual welfare of the people. And the Regular Clergy, living for the most part in convents situated in the country, and far away from the centres of business and commerce, was not in a position to offer much help. For this purpose men were required practising the most complete detachment from the goods of this world, living a life of austerity in the midst of the people, and constantly preaching penance and a change of life both by word and by example. This was the idea which guided St. Francis in the foundation of the Orders of Friars Minor, and of the Poor Clares, and in starting the Third Order of Penance.

But, on the other hand, the Catholic Faith, even in those "*ages of faith*," was threatened by redoubtable heresies, which penetrated into the spirit of the faithful under cover of practising a purer Gospel and a higher form of Christianity. The Secular Clergy, at a time when the Universites were beginning to organize themselves, often did not possess the necessary learning to oppose successfully the heretical movements. Though the Regular Clergy's education was not deficient, their secluded life, and their leanings towards the Liturgy rather than towards distracting controversies, did not allow them free action, except in extraordinary circumstances. Consequently the need was acutely felt for men who could entirely dedicate themselves to study and the defence of Catholic Dogma. This was the basic idea, which inspired St. Dominic de Guzman in the institution of the *Friar Preachers*. A keen theologian himself, and well versed in combating the heretics, he gathered round him many bright young men, and men of maturer age, and, blessed by Honorius III, spread them through the University towns, with them conquered University Chairs; and, though he insisted on the strictest personal poverty, like Francis of Assisi, unlike

him he wanted his convents to be endowed with rich libraries, ordaining that his Friars should lack nothing that is conducive to the acquisition of solid learning. Their success was enormous, and the names of Albert the Great, and of his greater disciple Thomas of Aquin, are the glory, not only of the Dominican Order but of the entire Church.

"*Pax*" is the word one reads carved on the doors of the great Benedictine Abbeys, and though the Monks had indeed to wage war against the flesh, the world and the devil, the war was silent and hidden, not disturbing the enveloping calm. Their convents may be likened to a landscape bathed in quiet moonlight; perhaps a dog barking in the distance, or the rumbling of a slow-moving waggon scarcely troubling the peaceful scene. St. Bernard could say of the life in the Cloister,

Here man more purely lives, less oft doth fall,
More promptly rises, walks with nicer heed,
More safely rests, dies happier, is freed
Earlier from cleansing fires and gains withal
A brighter crown!

"*War*" on the contrary, seemed to be the motto of the new religious Orders—war, carried into the enemy's camp; war against his vices, his errors, all his perversions. This new call was likely to attract many a generous young man. But would he find the practice of Asceticism easier in Religion than at home, would he more easily come to despise the world and its vanities in Religion, than he would in his own Christian family, disturbed now and then—it is true—by a brawl and a fight, yet, steady on the whole, and peaceful, and living in a Christian atmosphere of love and goodwill? Undoubtedly he would. For in the religious life he will be carefully trained in the practice of the Counsels of Christ. In the words of St. Thomas, he will be constituted in a state of perfection, not because, as at home, he can make an act of perfect charity, but because he binds himself for ever with eternal solemnity to strive to carry out, as far as he can, those

things which are of perfection, *i. e.*, the counsels of Christ. Also, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, his vows will give to all the actions which they reach, a definite merit, which is derived from a threefold source.

First, a vow is a true act of religion. Consequently it bestows on all the acts of other virtues, which it covers, the nature of a sacrifice, so that they become, as the vow itself, acts of divine worship.*

Secondly, since by the vows the whole man is offered up to God, the practice of every virtue under the obligation of the religious vows, is a much higher offering to God, than if done without the vows.

Thirdly, the Angelic Doctor points out that, through the vows, the soul is strengthened by being immovably bound to God, so that if the obligations taken are seriously maintained the practice of the ordinary virtue leads the soul to closer union with God. Besides, as the Mendicant Orders grew in age and experience, they provided better safeguards to the virtue of their members by the definite prescriptions of the Rule, by the vigilance of Superiors, and by studiously cultivating the spirit of prayer and of mortification. Certainly, it did require greater strength and courage to faithfully cooperate with grace in the new militant Religious Orders than perhaps it did in the old; yet the extraordinary number of their Saints, and the incalculable good which they have done in the Church, prove them to have been, and to be, real houses of Sanctity where Sanctity is not an exotic plant, as it might be in the world, but grows, as it were, in its own soil and in its own climate.

One may point out numbers of lazy and useless religious. But would such men have done any better in the world?....And

* Et ideo (*i. e.* quia votum est actus latriae) opera virtutum moralium sunt meliora si fiant ex voto, quia sic jam pertinent ad divinum cultum *quasi quaedam Dei sacrificia*. (2a, 2ae, Q. 88, a. 6 *in corpore*).

are you quite sure that their life of a life is laziness, and not rather a life of self-effacement and humility? As a writer has well put it, heroes and great men must be few in every walk of life. "One rain-drop of myriads falling on the moor or desert or mountain—one snow-flake out of myriads melting into the immeasurable sea—is and must be for most men the symbol of their ordinary lives." One day will come when it shall appear which was the greater—the poor lay-brother gossip, who, however, in spite of his gossip, spent most of his time prayerfully tilling the ground, or washing plates in the scullery, or the great preacher, who stirred the cities and the countryside—or, for the matter of that, the critic, who thought them all fools, both the humble lay-brother, and the renowned preacher, and all those who leave this beautiful world to seek salvation in convent or cloister. As a great oak can afford to give food and shelter to weaker plants, which we sometimes call parasites, so a powerful Religious Order seems at times to nourish useless members and idle men. It is, I believe, the fate of all human institutions; nor should their worth be judged from that, or too much stress be laid on what is but exceptional and rare.

As to the foolishness of the Religious Life in general, we that know something of it, shall merely repeat these few lines, which are a fitting answer to the accusation :

Dreamers of dreams: we take the taunt with gladness,
Knowing that God, beyond the years you see
Hath wrought the dreams that count with you for madness
Into the substance of the life to be.

(C)

THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

The sixteenth century brought a new type of Religious Orders to the Church of God, of which the *Society of Jesus* "on account of the force for its organization, the grandeur of its plans,

the extent of its enterprises, and the strange tenacity of the hatred it has enkindled" is certainly the most prominent. I have already spoken of its battles against the Protestant Reformation. Hence, what is to be remarked here is merely the fact that the new Company leaned more and more to the *active life*, which the Mendicant Orders had so successfully engrafted on the more contemplative life of the Monks. The Jesuits are thus free from the obligation of the Choir; in their magnificent Churches more prominence is given to the preaching of the Word of God than to long services and eleborate liturgical functions; their habit has nothing peculiar about it, but is similar to, or even identical with that of the Secular Clergy; their houses are different from Convents and Monasteries, and, though subject to the restrictions of the "*enclosure*," cannot for a moment be likened to the monumental Abbeys of the Benedictines or to the poor dwellings of the Franciscans. It has been said, and with perfect truth, that

> Bernardus valles; colles Benedictus amabat;
> Franciscus vicos; magnas Ignatius urbes—

St. Ignatius, like St. Dominic, preferred populous towns to the valleys loved by St. Bernard, or the hills sought by St. Benedict, or the little villages chosen by St. Francis of Assisi; for in the towns his "*Company*" of soldiers could successfully wage war against heresy and vice. Yet, though the countryside was not usually chosen by the Jesuits to live in, their Missionaries did not disdain to work in the smallest villages lost among the Alps or the Appenines, and often wrought there wonderful changes in the moral life of the people.

It would be wrong, however, to call the Society of Jesus merely an *active* Order. The novitiate, which was lengthened from one to two years; the time of formation, which usually goes from the eighteenth till well over the thirtieth year; the Exercises of St. Ignatius, which are made in their entirety at the beginning of the Religious Life and after the studies are over, during a third year of rigorous probation, and then are repeated for eight

or ten days of every year; one hour's meditation and half-an-hour's examination of conscience every day; besides the daily celebration of Mass and the private recitation of the Breviary, ensure that spirit of prayer and communication with God, without which all external activity is bound to be ephemeral.

The military character of the new Society, and its work in the Missions, made imperative a more complete detachment from one's country and one's relations, which, though insisted on by the older Religious Orders, had never been carried to such extremity as the Society did carry it. It has been well written that "A Jesuit has no home; the world is his parish. Mobility and cosmopolitanism are of the very essence of the Society. As Ignatius said, the ancient monastic communities were the infantry of the Church, whose duty was to stand firmly in one place on the battlefield; the Jesuits were to be her light horse, capable of going anywhere at a moment's notice, but especially apt and designed for scouting and skirmishing."

But the main feature of the Order founded by St. Ignatius was obedience. At a time when the authority of the Papacy was shaken to its foundations by the Lutheran and Calvinistic rebellion, he placed his men at the entire disposal of the Holy See for any work which the Pope might require of them. Only one thing did Ignatius except, and that was the acceptance of ecclesiastical dignities, unless commanded by the legitimate authority under pain of sin.

St. Benedict in the first lines of his Rule for Monks tells his disciple that his words are directed "to thee who, renouncing thy own will, dost take upon thee the strong and bright armour of obedience to fight under the Lord Christ, our true King, that thus by the labour of obedience thou mayest return to Him, from whom thou didst depart by the sloth of disobedience." The words of St. Benedict are re-echoed by St. Ignatius who insists that all in the Society should "give themselves to perfect obedience; acknowledging the Superior (whoever he be) in place of Christ our Lord,

and yielding him inward reverence and love. And they must not only obey him in performing exteriorly the things which he enjoins entirely, readily, constantly and with due humility, without excuse, though the things commanded be hard and repugnant to nature; but also they must endeavour to be resigned interiorly, and to have a true abnegation of their own will and judgment, conforming their will and judgment wholly to what the superior wills and judges, in all things where there appears no sin; proposing to themselves the will and judgment of the superior as a rule of their will and judgment, that they may be the more exactly conformed to the first and chiefest rule of every good will and judgment, which is the Eternal Goodness and Wisdom."

This is the gist of Jesuit Obedience, against which so many arguments have been urged. On the one side we have Protestants and Non-Catholics in general, to whom the very idea of Religious Obedience seems to be repugnant; on the other, we have many Catholics, and even Religious, whose objections aim chiefly at obedience as proposed by St. Ignatius.

A fair representative of the first group is William James who writes: "One cannot say that Obedience is held in great honour in our times. At least in Protestant countries we think that the individual has the duty to regulate his own conduct, facing the good or bad consequences of his independence. This idea has become part and parcel of our way of thinking, so that we find it difficult to represent to ourselves reasonable beings who think it good to submit their will to the will of another man. I confess that for me this is little short of a mystery."

And yet one may say that Obedience, i. e. the submission of one's will to the will of another man, is the necessary condition of all social life, beginning with the family, where the children have to obey their parents, and going on to the towns and cities, where the regulations of the Municipal Boards have to be kept, and finally ending in the various departments of the State, which cannot subsist except on the more or less willing obedience of all the subjects.

One, of course, might say that this kind of obedience is finally willed by all, who perceive the impossibility of any civilization and progress without it. But clearly, religious obedience also is finally willed by the Religious, who freely and of his own accord chooses such a kind of life.

It may also be argued that in one case the obedience is merely external, whilst in the other it extends to the will and even to the intellect. This, however, merely shows that the Catholic concept of obedience, which, in the case of the Religious, insists on his obedience being both internal and external, is noble and honourable for it excludes all hypocrisy and make-belief, and cuts at the very root the great worldly maxim: "Not to be found out."

If one urges that this is tantamount to yielding up one's conscience to another—the answer is simply that it is not so. Conscience cannot be alienated; and a religion demanding such a thing cannot come from God. Yet, though I keep my conscience intact, why may I not propose to live under a Rule, which, under the highest guarantees, I know for certain to be good and pleasing to God? And why may I not obey my Superiors, not in everything they please, but in whatever they may command me, in accordance with the spirit of the Rule and the Law of God and of the Church? Who does not see that by acting in this manner not only do I not destroy my will but rather I strengthen it, and make it less liable to sin and vice? Listen to Cardinal Gasquet writing on this very point: "Whilst on the one hand a life of true obedience is by no means easy, on the other, if the life be lived honestly and with a determination to get all the advantages in the spiritual order that are to be had from the supreme sacrifice of the will for God's sake, the result is certain and consoling. Not only are responsibilities shifted to the shoulders of superiors and the mind freed from worries and difficulties of all sorts, but the soul, purified by the abnegation of self, experiences more fully the attraction of God's grace and

can rise with greater freedom to some of the spiritual heights it is capable of attaining, and the bond of union between itself and God is drawn more closely."

The Ignatian Obedience has had many enemies; yet—though it may seem paradoxical—Obedience which is exclusively and specifically Ignatian does not exist. What St. Ignatius proposes had long been practised by many Saints in the Church of God, and I believe there is not a single expression both in the Rules and in the famous Letter on Obedience, which Ignatius addressed to the Jesuits that were in Portugal, that cannot be found in the old ascetical writers. Still it may be argued that the Soldier of Pampeluna has so organized these scattered limbs as to produce a system of Obedience unheard of in the Church before his times, which flattens out all individuality, and reduces men to little more than machines, blindly and mechanically obeying the slightest wishes of the "Black Pope of Rome."

I am the last man in the world to deny the organizing genius of St. Ignatius of Loyola, who has planned the Company of Jesus, so rigid and yet so supple, so united together with its head and yet so varied, as to be a veritable army in the Church of God. Now, the strongest bond which keeps an army together and makes it really efficient, is the bond of obedience. Once that is broken, the army is but a crowd of poor men, fit to be butchered and torn to pieces by the artillery of the enemy. Ignatius realized the need of his own times for a Religious Order well knit together and ready to carry out the commands of Christ's Vicar on earth. Only thus could the disruptive forces in Christendom be weakened—forces of heresy, of lust for unchecked freedom, of exaggerated Nationalism. The Society was produced, which has been suppressed indeed, but never reformed; for its Obedience, which preserved it from corruption, gave it the strength to say "yes" even to that Pope who commanded it not to be.

The fear has sometimes been expressed that, if an attempt were made to transplant such a rule of obedience outside the Society, into a body of men, and especially of women, not properly trained and without the safeguards devised by the prudence of St. Ignatius, or suggested by long experience, it would probably spell disaster, and result in the triumph of petty despots on the one side, and the multiplication of miserable hypocrites or most unhappy victims on the other.

But in the Society, where the Professed have a solid theological and ascetic formation, where possible abuses on the part of superiors are checked by consultors and admonitors, where visitations of higher Superiors are frequent, where the period of office for each superior, except the General, is strictly limited, where all efforts are made to place the right man in the right place, and where finally even the General is technically under the authority of the General Congregation, which is the body that represents the whole Society—such a method of Obedience is wholesome, and calculated to work for the greatest spiritual good of both the individual and the Church. The injunction of St. Ignatius that Superiors should have all power for good extended, and all power for evil checked and destroyed, has ever been carried out in the Society—and that explains its success, as well as the hatred, jealousy and tenacious envy, to which it has always and everywhere, been subjected.

(D)

RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH

The Education of Youth in the West up to the sixteenth century had never been properly organized, and in the sixteenth century it laboured under very peculiar disadvantages. When I speak of youth I mean those boys and young men whose studies lead up to the doors of a University; in other words, those students who receive a kind of general education, neither elementary nor specialized, which is now called the Humanities

and Rhetoric, or Gymnasium and Lyceum, or High School and Intermediate, according to the various systems prevailing in different countries.

In the Middle Ages the Benedictine Monasteries were the homes of study, and the depositories of ancient learning. The specific work which was carried on in the Monastery School was chiefly intended for the Novices. In some cases, however, an outer school was added for lay students, where they were taught the seven liberal arts, the reading of classical authors and the music of the Church. To the Monastery Schools must be added the Cathedral Schools and the few institutions established by towns, guilds, and other corporations. Wealthy families could afford to have private tutors for the education of their children. Not infrequently private individuals gathered a few boys whom they taught the rudiments of Grammar, and the little else which the teacher might know, and the pupil might learn without great effort. All this, though it worked in some way, was unsatisfactory.

Hence the need was great for a band of men learned and devoted, to undertake the task of imparting primary and secondary education efficiently, and of freeing it from the effete and pedantic adherence to obsolete methods which shackled it. Several religious institutions devoted themselves to the enterprise, but no one so successfully as the Jesuits. They realized the importance of education for the reformation of morals, and for preparing a well-instructed laity, earnest and loyal subjects in the Kingdom of God.

"Putting fresh spirit and devotion into the work, they not merely taught and catechized in a new, fresh and attractive manner, besides establishing free schools of good quality, but provided new school books for their pupils, which were an enormous advance on those they found in use, so that for nearly three centuries the Jesuits were accounted the best schoolmasters in Europe, as they were, till their forcible suppression

in 1901, confessedly the best in France. The Jesuit teachers conciliated the goodwill of their pupils by mingled firmness and gentleness. Although the method of the "*Ratio Studiorum*" has ceased to be acceptable (?), yet it played in its time as serious a part in the intellectual development of Europe as did the method of Frederick the Great in modern warfare." (Cfr. *Encyc. Brit.* Article on "*Jesuits.*").

St. John Chrysostom in his commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew writes: "I have a higher esteem for him who does not ignore how to educate the spirit of youth, than for any painter, or sculptor, or any artist whatever,"—and the Church has ever held in great honour those Orders and Congregations who devote themselves to such noble work. Besides the Jesuits, we must mention the sons of St. Joseph Calasanctius, the Christian Brothers, the Salesians, among men; and among women the Ursulines, the Sisters of the Presentation, the Religious of the Sacred Heart, and a host of others.

(E)

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THE MISSIONS

Besides the Education of Youth, another, and most important work in the Church of God is the Work of the Missions. The Secular Clergy, tied as they usually are to their Parishes, and encumbered with personal possessions and relatives, can well attend to the work of consolidation and preservation of the faith at home. But the pioneer work of spreading the faith among the infidels must be undertaken by men, who "do not possess gold nor silver, nor money in their purse," (Matt. X) and yet "having nothing possess all things." Such are the Religious, who, because of their vow of poverty are not tied down to a particular place and are free from the care of property; but, on account of their organization, are freed also from the anxieties common to all men, of providing wherewith to live at present, and to ward off indigence and destitution in sickness or old age.

Most of the Missionaries who evangelized the Northern parts of Europe were Monks from Ireland, Italy and France. It is true that the evangelization of the Slavs was not wholly the work of Monks; nor was it entirely due to their efforts if South America and several coastal populations in the East were brought into the fold. But the Apostles of these countries, though often belonging to Religious Orders, were supported by Princes and Secular Governments. Such a support having practically ceased in the nineteenth century, the Catholic Missions, instead of withering and dying, as might have been expected, on the contrary increased and multiplied. The actual number of religious institutions of Priests devoted to the Missions is 52; whilst the institutions of Secular Priests working in Missionary Countries is 16. In 1923 the total number of European Missionary Priests was 9,196, of whom about 600 were seculars, the rest religious; and the number of Religious Congregations of indigenous Missionary Priests was 15.

At the end of 1918, the number of Missionary Brothers was much reduced; in 1923 there were 3,187 European Brothers working in the Missions among the infidels. Though their collaboration is extremely important, experience has shown that the participation of Missionary Nuns in the work of conversion is even more so. For, many works carried on by Brothers in the Missions can also be entrusted to good and honest married men. On the contrary, the task fulfilled by the Nuns in Schools and Hospitals, both for the Christians and for those outside the fold, cannot in general be entrusted to married women or girls free from religious vows. The Missionary Sisters have freely chosen a life of sacrifice under every form. They serve the sick and the lepers in hospitals, old, helpless men and women in asylums, little children in schools and orphanages. They do this for supernatural motives, not for any worldly remuneration and gratitude. It is the love of Christ, which in them is stronger than any human love, that has been capable of making them overcome their weakness, and abandon the beautiful dreams of a

peaceful family, and perhaps of sweet little children who would call them "*Mother.*" This noble love conquers all obstacles, fecundates natural goodness, and gives to the sacrifice of the Sisters a peculiar attractiveness. In fact, it leaves an ineffaceable impression in the hearts of the Pagans usually so cold, who must needs ask themselves; "What Religion is this that can create such sacrifice? We, Mahomedans, keep our women closed up in our harems, and have never dreamt of allowing them to work among strangers, to be mothers to the motherless. We, Hindus, wish our girls to marry early; for, how can we trust them far from our eyes, the world being so wicked, and they so weak? It would be inconceivable for us, Chinese, to allow our daughters to go to Europe and America — hells of materialism and wickedness, as we know them to be—to work for the despised foreigners. But these women, often young and beautiful, come amongst us, and educate our children, take care of our old people, always smiling, always serene. And they are as pure as the light of heaven, and as good as the Angels. Indeed, a Religion that can inspire such noble ideals is a divine Religion."

Though statistics are not easily obtainable, Fr. Arens in his *Manuel des Missions Catholiques*" puts down the number of European Missionary Sisters at about 13,000, coming from all nations and from all classes of society. But, wherever Catholicism is planted, the lilies of purity and the roses of sacrifice blossom without delay, and fill this poor world with their fragrance. Though the faith in the United States is not old, the number of Missionary Congregations of Nuns there is already 27, and is growing daily. Greece and the Balkans are mostly schismatical. Yet the few Catholics there have 4 Congregations of women working chiefly among the Orthodox and the Catholics of the Byzantine rite. In the Near East there are Armenian, Arab and Egyptian Sisters. In India the number of Religious Congregations of Indian Women is 20, to which 17 more must be added, which follow the Rules of the Third Order of St. Francis, St. Clare, the Visitation and so forth.

This magnificent army of the "*Heralds of Christ*" is not merely a witness to the undying love for Jesus of Nazareth, which is burning in the heart of Catholicism, and of the passion for sacrifice which He alone has been able to create and to sustain; but it reveals also the great faith of the families, which remain at home, but unceasingly send forth their sons and daughters to teach the Gospel of Christ; and it manifests the spirit of charity which inspires the Missions, encourages them and generously supports them.

(F)

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE AND MODERN TIMES

What we have seen so far gives us but a faint idea of the significance of the Religious Life in the Catholic Church. We have seen it more in its outward activity than in its inner workings, though we have caught some glimpses of the latter also. But one might think that the Religious Life is a thing of the past, destined gradually to die of inanition. For how can it thrive in this modern world, which is surely not given to contemplation and idle dreams, whose problems are problems of life and not of death? What can Religious Life have in common with modern business methods, with our workmen, who need redress more than patience, with our women, who want independence more than help and obedience? There is no room for a Religious in our Newspaper Offices, in our Universities, in our film centres, in our international Banks, in our mechanized and rationalized industries!

The Church, which is confronted with all this new activity, and with all the problems it involves, is not discouraged. She knows she is to be the leaven of the world for all times; and she endeavours to fulfil her Mission. Perhaps in another place we shall cast a glance on her activities among the young, the workmen, the women; in the Universities, in political and industrial centres, in the towns and in the country; in Mayfair

and in the purlieus of Billingsgate. But now we must confine ourselves to the Religious.

Besides the remarkable adaptability to modern conditions shown by the Jesuits, the Oratorians, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Benedictines and many other Religious Orders, modern times have favoured the development of peculiar Congregations, aiming at the fulfilment of the special religious needs of the world today. I shall say nothing here of the Salesians of Don Bosco, who, though born yesterday fill now the whole world; nor of the sons of the Venerable Murialdo; nor of the numberless Congregations of women, sprouting up everywhere, in the fertile soil of the Catholic Church.

I shall only make a few remarks on the young "*Company of St. Paul,*" which, having been started soon after the war by the Secretary to the late Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Ferrari, is known also by the latter's name. It consists of two sections, one for men, the other for women. They are all consecrated to God by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, which, however, are not perpetual. Their aim is not the giving alms to the poor, or the direct relief of distress under any form; it is rather to help working men and women in their difficulties and set them on their feet. After a series of Lectures which Don Rossi—the founder of the Company—had given to some Milanese workmen, Cardinal Ferrari remarked that usually we are quite ready to preach, or to speak to the poor—"Words, words . . . ," he said, "but words go rarely deep. Is it not works, rather than words that count?" And Don Rossi, together with a few other Priests, began the great enterprise.

The working classes today stand in need of education. Schools were, therefore, started especially meant for them—commercial, technical, complementary, training schools; schools where they learn shorthand, typewriting, one or two foreign languages and so on. The classes are held during the day, or at night, or on Sundays. Women are taught

knitting, sewing, embroidery, drawing, and the more humble, but necessary arts of cooking, washing and mending clothes. In the towns, working men and women find it difficult to get decent food and lodging; and the Company of St. Paul controls restaurants, kitchens, boarding houses, which are clean, cheap and honest; and there the people can find harmless recreations, such as the cinema, the theatre, gymnastics, swimming and so forth. The great havoc which Communism and Materialistic Socialism have wrought among the people through the Press is apparent to all. And Don Rossi in Italy alone is editing three Catholic Dailies, three Weeklies, one meant for Christian families, another addressed to working girls, the third written for children and boys; young men, besides the Dailies, have a monthly Magazine all to themselves. Unemployment, which is great in Europe after the War, has attracted the notice of the Company of St. Paul, which in Milan alone, in 1924 found work for 26,000 working men and women. Then a branch attends to the needs of discharged prisoners, another offers legal advice to the poor in distress, a third one busies itself with the recovery or formulation of legal and other documents. On the 2nd February 1925 the foundation stone was laid of what is already a gigantic building for the waifs and minors who have been discharged from prisons and houses of correction. The Company is firmly established in Milan, Rome, Bologna and Venice. Its first venture outside Italy was at Jerusalem, its second at Buenos Aires, its last is at Paris. Here at 21 Rue Blanche is the centre of their women's activities; at Rue des Roses, among the "Reds," they have a social service building, replete with the most up-to-date contrivances for giving medical aid, legal advice and all the other assistance that such a centre can give. Now they have bought a whole block in the centre of University life, where they will open a "*Palace of Youth*" especially intended for the student population.

The whole venture reads like a romance; and when one thinks of the spirit of faith which animates the members of the new

Company, of the practice of self-sacrifice so natural to them; when one enters the Chapel which is attached to every one of their houses, and sees them praying quietly, and asking our Lord for help and guidance, one marvels at the fecundity of the Catholic Church, which in every age inspires men with the highest supernatural motives, not merely to work for their own individual sanctification, but also to spend themselves for the well-being, bodily and spiritual, of their fellowmen.

CONCLUSION

We shall conclude this Essay with two considerations: the first is a comparison between the Christian Religious Life and the Religious Life which, in some form or other, is to be met with outside the Catholic Church. We shall not dwell on superficial similarities such as the wearing of a peculiar habit, cutting the hair in a special manner, abstaining from certain kinds of food, renouncing marriage and life in the world, living on alms etc. These do exist, but in themselves they do not constitute religious life. This, among Catholics, is based on a *strong faith* in the future life, which is not a re-absorption in the primal self, nor an unconscious Nirvana; but consists in the most intimate union with God, brought about by the Beatific Vision. Christian Religious Life, being based on faith, and the desire to save one's soul, is *vivified by love.* This is not primarily the love of self, which prompts one to a disgust with, or a hatred of life, for life is full of sorrow and misery—but it is the vivid and active love for God, and especially the personal love for Jesus Christ, the God incarnate. Hence Christian Religious Life, rather than an attempt to pluck all love out of the heart, and starve into atrophy this most noble faculty, is an endeavour to fill the heart with the love of God, which, in its turn, will ennoble and spiritualize the love for all creatures, and especially for man, created by God and redeemed by Jesus Christ. Christian Religious Life will then manifest itself in a thousand ways, according as the realization of the love of God can best be

attained by various qualities and classes of men and women, considering their character, their times, their nation, their antecedents, and so forth. The Carthusian and the Trappist will realize their love for God in a spirit of penance and solitude; the Carmelite, in a desire for atonement and contemplation; the Benedictine, in an endeavour to work, study and pray. The love for God will be aimed at by the Franciscan in the practice of detachment from earthly possessions; by the Dominican, in the acquisition of knowledge to be spent for the defence of the rights of God and of his Church; by the Jesuit in a spirit of perfect obedience, which will make him fit to promote the greater Glory of God. St. Philip Neri, St. Jerome Aemiliani and St. Joseph Calasanctius will endeavour to show their love for God in sowing the same love in the hearts of the young. St. Angela Merici and Blessed Bartholomea Capitanio are moved by the love of God to work for the education of poor girls. St. Vincent de Paul, inspired by the love of God, is the Father of the Sisters of Charity, who serve and love Jesus Christ in the poor and in the sick. The love of God is thus like the Sun which illumines the whole world; and the Religious Orders are like the various plants and flowers in a beautiful garden. They all receive light from the Sun, but the lilies send it back all white, the roses red, and the other flowers, violet, orange, yellow, brown—in fact, they all receive light from the Sun; but by a mysterious faculty, they split it up into a thousand hues, thus creating beauty and variety, and manifesting inexhaustible activity. The Christian Religious Life, which is based on faith, and vivified by love, is checked and controlled by *Obedience.* Thus it avoids the dangers of exaggerated individualism, which, in free Ascetics, has often resulted in nervous breakdown, morbid illusions, self-tormenting mania; or in the cultivation of certain forms of external penance, like standing on one foot, keeping the arms raised up in the air till they wither, which are more calculated to win the admiration of men, than to contribute to real spiritual progress. Obedience also, besides

preventing a waste of useful energy in a life often lazy and unprofitable, is the highest form of self-sacrifice and self-immolation to God, if it is carried out in a spirit of faith and love, and in a sincere desire to please God rather than men, to know His Holy Will, and to do it.

The second consideration refers to a common objection which is often urged against Christianity by Hindus, Muslims, and other people, who do not belong to the faith. Having read the Gospel, and having been struck by the nobility of its moral code, and by the grandeur and sublimity of Christ's ideals, they afterwards look at the life of ordinary Christians, and they soon notice that it falls short of such high perfection. They are then inclined either to pronounce Christianity a failure, or to declare Christ's message impractical.

This attitude of mind, though natural in an outsider, is based on a misinterpretation of the doctrine of Christ, and on a confused reading of His message, as it is on paper, entirely dissociated from the living interpretation of the most earnest and deepest thinkers amongst Christ's followers. These have constantly distinguished in Christ's teaching two different currents, which, however, complete and harmonize each other. The first regards the whole of mankind, and proposes to all men what is necessary for salvation. Besides practising the Commandments of God and of the Church, all Christians—and all men should be such—in order to attain salvation must rid themselves of wordly habits, and strengthen in themselves the Christian virtues. This—and it is not a little—many of them do, and therefore they share the substantial Sanctity of Christ. Yet the message of Our Lord goes further. Besides the Commandments, it implies the Counsels of Perfection. Now, these are not meant for the generality of men; who, however, should not lose sight of them altogether, under pain of running the risk of breaking even the Commandments, and missing what is most inspiring in Christianity. They are meant instead for those who strive

after perfection. Of such there have been and there are, thank God, even now, millions and millions in Christendom. They are to be found everywhere, in the towns and in the country, among the rich and among the poor as well. Hasty travellers to the West miss them, for they do not advertise themselves as vice does, and their houses are not illumined at night as are the Theatres and the Casinos. Many follow the Counsels of Christian Perfection in the world; yet it is the Religious Life which is the "*State of Perfection*" *par excellence*. This, of course, does not mean that those who live in Religion are perfect, it only means that every Religious, by his profession takes upon himself a lifelong obligation to fulfil the Counsels of Christ. In the world we are free to use or not to use the Counsels of Perfection; but a Religious, by his vows, binds himself to live by the Counsels as well as by God's Commandments.

And that the majority of Religious fulfil their obligations no one who knows them, who has conversed with them, or has lived with them, can doubt. They are indeed the beloved of Christ; they endeavour to draw nigh to God, and God draws nigh to them; and Jesus Christ triumphs in them, for their life is a perpetual act of faith in Him, and of love for His Sacred Person. They show that Christianity is not a failure; they realize Christ's ideals of perfection; and, living in the world though they are not of the world, they are a source of inspiration to all men.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE SAINTS

(A)

NATURE AND GRACE

In the foregoing pages we have endeavoured to study Christian Sanctity in its various manifestations, and the natural conclusion, which, I trust, will flow from our considerations, is that the Catholic Church is the garden of Sanctity, the home, where Saints are born and grow in the sight of God, to be transferred in due time to the unclouded contemplation of Him, who is subsistent and substantial Sanctity.

Various ideas occur to our minds when we think of the Saints. Sometimes we regard them as God's elect, on whom extraordinary gifts and favours were showered, so that their life was one of unbroken progress from perfection to higher perfection, with some experience of temptation indeed, but hardly with any experimental knowledge of failure and defeat.

Or we look upon the Saints as we look on the great heroes of history—men of extraordinary strength of will and clarity of vision, in whom heroism of virtue was as inborn as in Napoleon was inborn the secret of victory, or in Michaelangelo the proportion of form, and in Rossini the harmony of sound. Often our ideas about the Saints are coloured by the lives which we have read, lives not infrequently written with regard rather to edification than historical accuracy, or with a desire to establish the author's idea of Sanctity rather than with a firm grasp of its actual and living realization in the Saint himself. At the present day the tendency is to emphasize the human side in the development of Sanctity; a tendency as open to exaggeration as the older methods, which in the Saint regarded chiefly the

workings of grace, not as they really are, harmoniously engrafted in human nature, but as something external and artificially superadded.

That *the times* in which the Saint lived should be taken into account is plain, for otherwise he will appear like one of those Byzantine pictures we find in our Art Galleries. They are set in gold; but there is no background, and hardly any perspective; they are rich; but at the same time stiff and rigid. Just as the peculiar taste of a fruit does not depend entirely on the tree and on the manner in which it was cultivated but also on the soil which bore it, so some special features in the Saints are derived, not merely from the inner workings of grace (*Dei enim agricultura sumus*) but also from the times and circumstances in which they lived. Thus when we read the Homilies of St. Leo the Great we catch a glimpse of the majesty and grandeur of Rome; whilst the commentaries of St. Gregory I make us feel at times the despondency which must have filled the heart of the Great Pontiff, harassed by the wiles of Constantinople, troubled by the fierceness of the Longobards, saddened by the slackness of the Priests, and grieved by the poverty and misery of the people. The strange penances of some of the Fathers of the Desert, and the enormous influence which was exercised by the Stylites, would scarcely be conceivable in Europe in the XVIII century, but they, somehow, fit their places well in the fifth and in the sixth. The racy humour of St. Philip Neri reminds one of the Florentine "*vivezza*;" and the peculiar stiffness and formalism noticeable in St. Aloysius, chiefly before he entered Religion, can be traced to the years he spent at the Court of Philip II in Spain.

Another advantage will be derived from a diligent study of the epoch in which the Saint lived. That is the persuasion that almost all the Saints thoroughly understood its moral and spiritual needs. Of course, I do not speak here of Saints like St. Stanislaus Kostka, who died at the age of 18, and so could

not exercise a direct influence on his times. But take St. Bernard, for instance, who was the Counsellor of Kings and Popes, and at the same time the mystical Director of men living a life of contemplation in the solitude of Clairvaux. He seemed to have been equally at home when preaching the Crusade to soldiers and knights, and when explaining the Canticle of Canticles to his devoted followers. Or think of St. Vincent de Paul, whose experience ranged from life on the galleys to life at the most brilliant Court in Europe; who organized charity without drying up its supernatural source, and provided towns and villages with Priests who knew how to preach the Word of God and aim at the souls of their hearers, not at their purses.

That *heredity* and sanctity are not entirely unconnected, I think most Theologians will admit; not, of course, in the sense that sanctity is transmitted in the same way as the colour of the hair or of the eyes, for the latter are natural characteristics, whilst the former is essentially supernatural; but in some such sense as the soul can be said not to be wholly free from the laws of heredity; for, though it is created by God, it has nevertheless a certain proportion to the body, which it "informs," and consequently it bears a certain, more or less definable, relation to inherited habits and "aptitudes." Just as the mathematical genius of the Bernouilli's remained in the family for quite a number of generations, and so could be called hereditary; so we may say that the solid virtue and honesty which is observable in many an old Catholic family is in a sense hereditary, and affords the best soil for the implanting and growing of the germs of supernatural sanctity. The relation is no doubt "accidental" in the technical sense of the word, which stands in opposition to the word "substantial;" yet it is not extrinsic, but most intimate; it is not passing and transitory, but permanent; and it colours the manifestations of sanctity in quite a peculiar manner.

"*Il sangue sanese é uno sangue dolce,*" says St. Bernardine of Siena, and we notice its influence in the loveableness of his

own sanctity, and even more in that of St. Catherine of Siena. Though austere and mortified in the extreme, the great ecstatic never loses her liking for flowers, and her delight in nature. How often she testifies her love for her friends by sending them bunches of flowers gathered with her own hands! It is said that when she met little children, she covered them with kisses; and the letter in which she describes how she prepared a young man to die on the scaffold, and how she consoled him, and allowed him even to rest his head on her bosom, will ever remain one of the most touching expressions of human love, transfigured by supernatural charity.

Notice, however, the principle that regulated all the activities of her inherited disposition: "The reason why God's servants love creatures so much is that they see how much Christ loves them, and it is one of the properties of love to love what is loved by the persons we love."

I do not think the subtle influences of a mother on her yet unborn infant are merely physiological. Her trust in God, the transports of her love for Jesus Christ Crucified, or hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, are not purely intellectual; but they are so intimately connected with her heart and with her bodily frame, as to flow over the spirit, as it were, and charge her very blood with a kind of divine attraction and mystical magnetism, which cannot but have a most beneficent effect in moulding in her child those dispositions to virtue, which can be so easily elevated and divinized later on by the secret action of the Holy Ghost. We have no difficulty in ascribing a kind of subordinate causality in respect to sanctification, to the education which is imparted to us, and which is made up of verbal teachings and practical examples. But just as words can be charged with the spirit of God—or of the devil—; just as visible actions may be the carriers of God's graces; so even flesh and blood can work in us those remote aptitudes, that physical receptivity, which does not, indeed, deserve God's grace, but answers so readily to its faintest

approaches. Do you think the Motherhood of St. Monica gave us merely the outward covering, the husk, so to say, of St. Augustine? Yet St. Augustine's wanderings, and his early sinful life seem to contradict my theory. I believe it is not so; but I leave it to the reader to supply the proper answer.

(B)

PROGRESS IN SANCTITY

For Augustine's example affords me an opportunity of speaking of another and most important matter in the lives of the Saints: that is the *development of their Sanctity*. This point is overlooked in many lives of the older type; for, the authors being anxious to present to their readers a model for imitation, lay stress mainly on what is perfect in their hero, and do not endeavour to show how perfection was reached. But the careful students find real development even in such saints as St. Aloysius Gonzaga, or St. Teresa of the Infant Jesus, who were prevented by an abundance of grace from their earliest years. Much clearer is the development in Saints like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Teresa, and clearest it is in those whose early life was a life of sin, like St. Augustine, St. Margaret of Cortona and others. But even with regard to the latter Saints, though the biographer is careful to point out the triumph of grace in their conversion, he often assumes that they have attained to perfection almost instantaneously. Or, what is surely not better, he presents a kind of dialectic development, according to a carefully planned out psychological scheme of his own creation; something akin to a euclidean type of evolution, where each proposition is logically linked with the previous one; with no gaps, no leaps and no regressions. Yet development in Sanctity is better described by the word "*vital*," than by the word "*dialectic*." The Saints progress, but freely, not under compulsion; they progress, but sometimes with difficulty, sometimes with ease and facility. They know the fierceness of battle, and, perhaps, even the misery

of defeat. Only that their defeats are never permanent. If they fall, they also know how to rise; for their confidence in God is great; and God is never found wanting. Often they doubt; sometimes the course of action which they elect is not the best but they cling to it, thinking it is all for the Glory of God. Later on, when they see better, they alter their ways. In his youth St. Philip Neri will sell his books, and will distribute the price to the poor. But when he is older "he will return to his books, and will no longer fear to combine his acquired sacred science with all that is best in human learning." At first, when the fervour of conversion is red-hot, they will do extraordinary penances, for such is their idea of Sanctity. Then little by little they learn that penance is but a means to an end; and they use it as such; never do they make of it an end in itself. We find a classical example of this in the life of St. Ignatius. When we compare the General of the Society of Jesus with the Penitent of Manresa, we miss the external penances, the rough habit, the matted hair, the humiliating begging; all in fact those external signs of Sanctity, which are too easily mistaken for its infallible characteristics. Yet, in St. Ignatius they were but the first outward appearances of perfection; true appearances, no doubt, and presaging a magnificent development later on; still they had to be dropped, as naturally as the crysalis drops its first covering to assume the fair hues of the butterfly.

The Autobiography of St. Teresa affords us another example of how the highest summits of perfection are reached gradually and, one would almost say, step by step, by God's elect. At first "my heart was so hard," she tells us, "that I could read the whole Passion without shedding a single tear." And this, though her natural sensibility was great. Listen, in fact, how she describes her feelings when leaving home: "I am only telling the truth," she writes, "for I remember it distinctly, that when I left my father's house, I felt pain like that which one feels in one's agony; and I do not believe that death itself can be more painful. I felt as if all my bones were torn apart."

But gradually, also the things of God affect her to tears, and she says that "these tears, which are, in a way, the result of our own persevering efforts, helped by grace, are of immense value; and it would be worth all the labours in the world, to obtain even a single one of them."

Her defects are not all got rid of, though they change with age. "My son," she said one day to a religious, "when I was young I was told I was beautiful, and I believed it; later on I was told I was wise, and I believed that too far too readily. I have often had to accuse myself in Confession of these two vanities." We are apt to think that prayer and contemplation were mere gifts in St. Teresa, to which she hardly contributed her share. "But I own," she relates, "that many a time I should have preferred the hardest penance to the torment of having to recollect myself in prayer. I made efforts against myself, however, and God helped me. But in order to conquer myself, I had to make use of all the courage I possess, which is not slight, so I am told."

God rewarded the generous efforts, and towards the close of her life St. Teresa "combined the active and the contemplative life, and while remaining united to God, she was able to employ herself in works of charity, in reading, and the duties of her state of life." "Everything," she adds, "helped me to know God better and to love him better than ever before."

When attempting to describe the development of Sanctity care should be taken to point out the influence exercised by the various *Ascetical Schools* in the Catholic Church. The Franciscans are imbued with the spirit of St. Bonaventure and Duns Scotus. The teacher of the Dominicans is St. Thomas of Aquin. The masters of the Carmelites are St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. The school of the Jesuits is to be found in the Exercises of St. Ignatius and in the classical Treatise of Religious Perfection by Alphonso Rodriguez. St. Francis of

Sales is the guide of the Nuns of the Visitation. St. Alphonsus is the Spiritual Director of the Redemptorists.

The Holy Ghost is undoubtedly the inspirer and prime mover of all Sanctity; yet His activity, in so far as it terminates in human beings, is, in a sense, conditioned by the clay they are made of, and is coloured by their ways of thinking, imagining, and feeling. For God does not destroy human nature, but works in it the image of His Divine Son, using the materials at hand, though sometimes they may seem less fit for the purpose. In the same way an eminent musician, who plays the organ, or the violin, or the flute, adapts himself to the nature of his instrument, and though the harmonies he creates may be fundamentally the same, the colour of the music differs with the different instruments. So the Sanctity of the Jesuits differs in many ways from that of the Capuchins; and that of the Carmelites has some characteristics which will not be found among the Daughters of St. Francis de Sales.

To use another simile: according to Catholic teaching, God is the Author of the Sacred Books; yet how different is Leviticus from the Book of Wisdom, or Job from the Book of Proverbs! And they differ not merely as to their subject matter, but also as to the language and style in which they are written. The majesty of Isaias is wanting in Jeremias; the way of writing of St. Matthew lacks the sublimity of St. John; and the harsh style of St. Mark is quite a contrast to the musical sentences of St. Luke.

For, inspiration does not destroy freedom, nor does it obliterate those traits peculiar to the Sacred Writers, which arose in them from the various circumstances of their lives, education and surroundings.

The same happens in the Saints. Sanctity, for instance, did not destroy the intense womanhood of St. Teresa. We know that, in a sense, she was even grateful to God for having made

her a woman. She was of opinion that the gift of contemplation and ecstasy is less frequent with men than with women; and she humourously tells us that the reasons for this devined by herself and those given her by St. Peter of Alcantara, were all to the advantage of women.

Remember how sanctity transfigured, but did not destroy, the great love St. Elizabeth of Hungary always felt for her husband. She loved him *supra quam credi valeat,* more than can be believed—says the old biographer—and exerted all her ingenuity always to be with him. When she heard that he had promised to join the Crusade, her grief was so acute that she fainted away. During the time of their separation she doubled her prayers and penances; but when he came back, she dressed herself magnificently in order to please him, and, as we read in the homely Latin of the medieval chronicler, she mortified herself severely the evening before going sweetly and joyfully to share her husband's bed (*ad lectumque mariti reversa hilarem se exhibuit et jucundam*).

But her love for the King did not make her forget the poor, the beggars, the sick and the dying. It is said that she even took the sheets from her own bed to wrap the dead in and she often followed the poorest of her subjects to the grave.

The principles above stated will explain (what otherwise may be perplexing and mysterious) why the visions of the Saints commonly adapt themselves to the mental constitution of the Saints themselves. Here I do not speak of those purely intellectual visions, which are granted to some only, where they feel the presence of God, they have a spiritual and experimental certitude that God is in them, and they enjoy a glimpse of His inner life, in such a manner, however, that words fail them to describe what they have seen or felt. But I speak of those visions where the imagination has its share, and the person seen is human, like the Blessed Virgin or the Saints, or, though the Person is divine like that of Our Blessed Lord, still, being

clothed with our humanity, has human features and human characteristics. Such visions usually conform to a definite type, both in the colour of the flesh and garments, and in the general behaviour. For, what God seeks in them, is not to dazzle the Saint, and astonish him with new creations, but rather to increase his union with Himself, to reward his virtue, and chiefly his love. This is not done by something so extraordinary that would produce a shock rather than a delightful intercourse. And it is the latter's nature to be keenly felt and enjoyed only when it is not disruptive of our psychological texture, but is gently and delicately woven into the woof and warp of our souls.

(C)

SAINTS AND HEROES

Yet, I repeat, the attainment of perfection in the Saints should be described as objectively as possible, in order to show its real and actual progress, and not eventually to prove or disprove a favourite theory. This method is bound to reveal both analogies and divergencies with other types of human development, which will be most instructive, and *edifying*, in the original sense of this much-abused word.

Can it be said that there is real freedom in the development of a great man—inner and vital and self-determined progress, that is, not merely a gradual manifestation of inherent inborn greatness? The answer is not so clear, for, almost always the manifestation of greatness is so intimately connected with circumstances, both antecedent and consequent, both social and intellectual, that the greatness, which was already there, though latent and dormant, could not but awake, and shine before the world. It is not easy to say whether Giotto, or Raphael, could really have helped being great painters; or Euler a great mathematician; or Napolean a leader of men. Genius was inborn in them; and though it needed culture to blossom in all its splendour, blossom it surely must.

But the case of sanctity is different; for sanctity is not the emergence of the subconscious and the subliminal, which comes to light when a certain nucleus of circumstances happens to coincide; but it is the result of a fully conscious and heroically faithful response to a divine vocation and to a freely and generously offered divine help, continued even till death.

Now, this divine help is offered to all, at least in a certain measure, so that all can attain to a certain degree of Sanctity. This is not the case with human greatness, which is essentially limited. If, on the other hand, the multitude does not reach that degree of virtue to which it is called, it is not because the higher power is lacking, or the circumstances adverse, but merely because the many do not respond to its invitations, or the response is inconstant. Hence the chain of graces is broken, sometimes for ever, sometimes to be linked up again, but not with the same firmness and ease. Still, Sanctity, implying merely a faithful and constant response to grace, can develop in the rich and in the poor, in the country and in the town, in the cloister and in the world. It is independent of culture and higher knowledge; it has not necessarily to rely on the support of friends, or parties, or organizations, as is so often the case with human greatness. Consequently it is genuine, not apparent; and it shines in its purest splendour before those who are nearest and best able to judge. Human greatness, precisely because it is human, is subject to decay. It wanes with the wearing away of the intellectual powers; it ceases when the hands begin to tremble, and the eyes lose their lustre. Sanctity, on the contrary, reaches its highest point on the death-bed; for only there it ceases to grow, when it has attained its final consummation in the eternal embrace of God.

We may further remark that, whilst human greatness is often onesided, so that the greatest scientist may at the same time be the vilest of men, and the most successful conqueror may be, and often is, a brutal murderer, or an unscrupulous egoist;

the Saint, on the contrary uses all his powers to fulfil in himself the divine plan, which is instinct with harmony and resplendent with truth. Hence the entrancing beauty of Sanctity, which not only commands admiration, but instils a chaste and pure love, which, in its turn, does not know the effervescence of passion, but is free from its inconstancy; which is not troubled by the pangs of jealousy, but is full of reverence and quiet strength.

(D)

PREJUDICES AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Some, however, may demur at all this, who see in the Saints but poor deluded persons who are enamoured of death, not of life; who love suffering and pain, not the innocent, human joys which God Himself offers us; who spend their time tormenting themselves, or dreaming idle dreams, instead of valiantly making the best of the opportunities, great or small, that are offered to them.

These objections, though vague and general, are yet so prevalent, that it is worthwhile considering them at some length. As to the Saints being in love with death rather than with life, we may say that their case is similar to that of a person who is separated from his beloved. He desires with all his heart to be united to her, and if such union demands a separation from his family and country, and implies a long voyage to an unknown land, he wishes to suffer the pangs of separation and the risks of voluntary exile, because only through them can his love be fulfilled. It is not really with death that the Saints are in love, but with God; and the intense desire they have of being united with Him, makes them cry out with St. Paul " *Cupio dissolvi,*" to which, however, they add with him "*et esse cum Christo.*" We usually love this life so much, and are so much afraid of death, because we have never realized who God is. Our knowledge of Him is more speculative and abstract, than heart-felt and real; and our love follows our knowledge. It may be

"*appretiative summus*" as the Theologians would say; and God in His mercy is satisfied with it, though no man would be content with it, if it was the only love his beloved would offer him. But the Saints have a deep and experimental knowledge of God; and it is in the light of such knowledge that they view all things. What wonder if earthly life fades before their eyes, and loses all its charms? They know what real life is.

I remember having visited once the awful dungeon of Parisina in the Castle of the Dukes of Este in Ferrara. We went down the narrow stairs into the very bowels of the earth. Door after door was unlocked as we went along the dark tunnel-like corridors, fitfully lighted up by the candles we were carrying. The air was damp; and drops of cold slimy water were oozing through the greenish, rough walls. Finally a last iron door was unfastened, which opened into a small, dark cell, with no light and scarcely any air to breathe. High up in the wall there was a hole, shut by a triple set of iron bars; and we could hear the waters of the moat surrounding the castle, splashing heavily against the huge rocks, in which the prison is hollowed out.

Suppose now a poor child to be born in such a hole, and to live there for five or six years, and then let him be carried out into the light, and the beautiful gardens above. Who can describe his astonishment and delight, as he sees the trees and the flowers, as he breathes the scented air, as he looks at the pure sapphire of an Italian sky. Perhaps in prison he had come to love a little spider, that had unfortunately strayed there; but now he looks at the peacocks strutting about, and at the swans gracefully floating on the crystal waters! In prison he had become friendly with the grimy, ominous-looking jailor, who was bringing him some coarse food. But what is he in comparison with the fine gentlemen and ladies, so kind and so beautiful, who smile at him, and caress him!

The simile can be continued at will; but this suffices to show us how impossible it will be for the poor child to love his

prison, and the crawling things in it, after he has seen this beautiful world. Now, the Saints have seen God and the things of God—not with their bodily eyes, but with the eyes of faith, sharpened by purity and love. So they live on here on earth, they try to see a reflection of God in the creatures which surround them; but really their "conversation is in heaven;" and, if there is sense in us, we may envy them; but blame them never.

The second objection is more subtle, for, common sense seems to tell us that there is no harm in loving the small, innocent pleasures of life, which, after all, come from God Himself.

But the Saints, by a strange—one would amost call it "morbid"—perversion, love suffering and pain, rather than joy and seem to delight in the cross, to ask for it, to be unhappy without it.

As usual, the strength of this objection lies more in its confusion than in its truth. And first of all, is it true to say that the Saints scorned the simple, innocent joys of life? One of the richest sources of pleasure is the love of nature, and I believe most of the Saints loved it with a great love. Of course, the manifestations vary, according to the character and nationality of the Saint. The aesthetic sense, for instance, is more developed in the early Greek Saints, than in those who flourished among more barbarous nations; and the appreciation and enjoyment of beauty seems to be more common in the Italian Saints, both ancient and modern, than in others. It is not necessary to transcribe here "*Il Cantico al Sole*" of St. Francis, which reveals a soul overflowing with love for the creatures of God. He loved the birds so much, that they seemed to understand him; and with him they lost all their natural shyness, and they came to him, and rested on his shoulders, and allowed him to caress them. We know how much St. Ignatius admired the beauty of the heavens, and how often he used to mount on a terrace at night to contemplate the wonders of the stars.

The Little Flower was very fond of snow, and she delighted in the flowers that were growing in the Convent garden.

It is not difficult to multiply similar examples; and it is easier still to show how much some of the greatest Saints in the Church delighted in study and the acquisition of knowledge. One may say that they applied themselves to study more from a sense of duty, than on account of the pleasure which may be derived from it; and this is certainly true with some of them who had no natural aptitude for study, like St. Joseph Cupertino and the holy Curé d'Ars. But to affirm such a thing of St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Augustine, St. Thomas of Aquin and a host of others, is to forget the most elementary laws of Psychology, which are usually not broken by the Saints, and which tell us that no really great work in Philosophy, or Theology or any human Science, can be accomplished by a man who applies himself to it merely from a sense of duty, unaided by natural inclination, and the pleasure which is derived from it.

Arts and Literature also were loved by many a Saint, who had opportunities to know them, and whose life was not spent entirely in the country, tending the sheep or ploughing the fields. I might quote here St. Philip Neri's fondness for that humorous work "Bertoldo," if I did not suspect that the Saint often exhibited it on his desk, more with a desire to hide his own sanctity, than because he was really fond of that whimsical book.

"Poverty I love, but not dirt," is a dictum attributed to St. Bernard; and St. Teresa agreed with him wholeheartedly. The episode of the noxious insects in the Convent of Avila is well known, and need not be repeated here. St. Francis of Sales ranked cleanliness among the smaller virtues.

One may remind me here of St. Thomas of Canterbury and of St. Benedict Joseph Labre, who apparently did not derive much pleasure from cleanliness. But, though I do not propose to enter upon an elaborate defence of these two lovers of insect-life, I may

be allowed to say that they are a warning to those who weigh the civilization of a people by the amount of soap they use, or who think that God must be repelled by a poor man, who does not wash or bathe as often as might be desirable.

We have seen how much St. Teresa loved her own family; and if she left her home, it was only to purify her love, not to destroy it. "I was carried up to heaven," she relates in her life, "and the first persons I saw there were my father and mother."

St. Jane Frances de Chantal stepped over the prostrate body of her son in order to enter Religion; yet, once she was a Religious, she worked to start her son in life, she helped her daughters to marry, she felt intense grief and sorrow at their misfortunes.

Another source of innocent pleasure in life is friendship and love. I have already spoken of the great love of St. Elizabeth of Hungary for her husband. Similarly St. Bridget, St. Lewis, St. Jane de Chantal found their earthly love no hindrance to divine love. The friendship of St. Francis Xavier for St. Ignatius was so deep, that, when in India, he was anxiously awaiting the coming of a ship that should bring a letter from the "Father of his soul," and if the letter was missing he felt the disappointment so keenly that the tears rose to his eyes.

In the history of many Saints who have founded or reformed religious institutions, we often find that the love and devotedness of a holy woman exercised a great influence over their work. To give only a few instances, let us remember St. Jerome and St. Paula, Matilda of Tuscany and St. Gregory VII, St. Clare and St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, St. Jane de Chantal and St. Francis of Sales.

All this, I believe, will dispel the objection that the Saints simply scorned the innocent joys of love. Yet the fact remains, that they loved suffering and the cross most passionately.

We, I am afraid, are like the Apostles, who, when our Lord spoke to them of His Passion and Death, and of the necessity

there was for His sufferings, never understood Him, and could not comprehend the "*Verbum Crucis.*"

But listen to St. Catherine of Siena writing to Pope Urban VI: "Become like to the meek Jesus, your Chief, *whose will it is, that from the beginning of the world until the end, nothing great shall ever be accomplished without much suffering.*" And St. Ignatius of Loyola thus speaks in the Summary of his Constitutions: ".... all those who make progress in spirit, and seriously follow Christ our Lord, love and ardently desire things contrary (to what the world loves and embraces); that is to be clothed with the same garment and livery of Christ our Lord, for his love and reverence. So that if it could be without any offence of the Divine Majesty, and without sin on the part of their neighbour, they could wish to suffer reproaches, slanders, and injuries, and to be treated and accounted as fools, (without at the same time giving any occasion for it) because they desire to imitate and resemble in some sort their Creator and Lord Jesus Christ, and to be clothed with His garments and livery, and since He clothed Himself with the same for our greater spiritual good, and gave us an example, that in all things, as far as by the assistance of God's grace we can, we may seek to imitate and follow Him, seeing He is the true way that leads men to life."

The holy M. Olier repeats: "I said interiorly: Lord, by suffering alone can I show my love for Thee. Lord, how can I live without expressing my love for Thee. Suffering for Thy sake will shew Thee that I love Thee."

When writing to a holy woman he says: "I have always recognized that *to suffer is the very essence of being a Christian.*" And St. Teresa, "Suffering alone can make life tolerable to me. My greatest desire is to suffer. Often and often I cry out to God from the depths of my soul: *Lord, either to suffer or to die.*"

But why multiply quotations, when from the Gospels, and the Epistles of St. Paul, and down to the letters of the last

Canonized Saints in the Catholic Church, it is always the same cry that we hear "I long to suffer for Jesus, the Son of God."

It is something strange, no doubt, this deep-rooted conviction that "nothing really great can be accomplished without suffering" — but it is as strange as the whole of Christianity is strange, which is the Religion of Suffering, whose leader is the "Man of Sorrows," whose banner is the Cross of Christ. It is something unintelligible, this desire to imitate Christ in suffering, and to be like Him, burdened with the cross. But it is unintelligible to those who do not love, whose heart has not been wounded by Christ Jesus. They do not feel the passion for expiation and atonement, the desire to weep for sin and sinners, and the sublime longing to be in all things like unto Jesus.

Finally, the third objection, or rather accusation, that calls the Saints idle dreamers, who lose their time uselessly, instead of making the best of their opportunities, is so wild, and betrays such ignorance of the lives of the Saints, that it scarcely deserves to be answered at all.

For, if we still believe that we come from God and are destined to go to Him, is it not due to the Saints, who live amongst us and share our joys and sorrows, but are not disfigured by our selfishness, are not stained with our sins? If we have not lost all our esteem and love for human nature, is it not due to the Saints, who could deprive themselves of food and clothing to give it to the poor, whom so many amongst us have perhaps sweated and exploited in a thousand shameful ways? The Saints are ready to kiss the wounds of the lepers whose very sight offends our sensibility; they are full of love for pilgrims and strangers, whom we treat with suspicion, or supercilious indifference; they open orphanages for the children, whom perhaps we have wronged before they were born; they open shelters and refuges, to gather in those poor remnants of humanity, whom perhaps we have wrecked. The Saints free the captives, rescue the slaves, defend the negroes, protect the

weak. They are to be found on the battle-fields, where we destroy each other, whilst they bandage our wounds. We meet the Saints in the hospitals, where they shower their tender cares on the sick and the poor; we meet them near the death-bed trying to console the friendless. There is no misery which they do not try to soothe, no sorrow which they do not endeavour to alleviate.

And that because "they abide in Christ and Christ in them," because they have plucked out all self-love from their hearts to fill them with the love of Jesus, because of each one of them can be said what St. John Chrysostom said of St. Paul:

"*Cor Pauli, cor Christi erat.*"

The heart of a Saint is the Heart of Jesus Christ.

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CHAPTER XV

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

AND

THE FOUNTAIN OF CHRISTIAN SANCTITY

I do not think I can better conclude these studies on Christian Sanctity than by dwelling at some length on that consoling dogma "*The Communion of Saints*," indicating the laws that regulate the circulation of supernatural life in every one of the members of the Mystical Body of Christ, and then pointing out—by means of a symbolic representation—the fountain whence the Church draws her holiness and power of sanctification.

(A)

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

In order to understand how the communication of the heavenly gifts and treasures takes place in the Church of God, we must recall to mind her marvellous Unity. This we shall do by gradual comparisons of the Catholic Church with various social bodies, where the ideal of unity is realized in varying degrees.

The Church—though Catholic and Supernational—may in a sense be compared to a *nation*, which is a political body, whose members are united together, within the same boundaries, by the same government, the same laws, the same official tongue, the same history and traditions. Hence, just as in the body politic, so in the Catholic Church, there is a real communication of rights and duties, of interests social and moral, of sorrows and glories, which is felt by all its members, and which does not exist at all,

or exists only in a very reduced form, with respect to aliens and foreigners.

As Catholics, we feel a legitimate pride in the achievements of the Roman Pontiffs in the cause of civilization; our hearts glow with enthusiasm when we read of Pope Leo the Great stopping Attila and the Huns on the plains of Lombardy; we share in the glory of Leo the Third, when he magnanimously attempts the unification of all nations in one great Empire, which should be holy, because it should subordinate its endeavours to secure peace and temporal prosperity, to the triumph of God's interests and the protection of His Church.

We understand that the development and consolidation of Catholic Law means a growth of our own strength, and a greater share for us of the benefit of order, and increased chances of individual improvement and well-being.

We know that the triumphs of Catholic Art, and Catholic Philosophy are our triumphs; and, somehow, we feel that the contributions of Catholicism to the progress of human thought are our contributions. The conquests of the Infidels are disasters for us, and the spread of heresy is regarded by us with the same grief that a Roman felt when the news reached him that the northern Provinces were lost, or the people on the Danube had rebelled.

Yet the communication of triumphs and sorrows, of gains and losses, which is so great among the members of the same nation, is clearly more intimate among the members of the same *family*, which is a social organism much more limited—it is true—but at the same time more compact and united than the nation.

Now, this is very remarkable in the Catholic Church that, notwithstanding its universality, and the vast number of its followers, its family spirit and its family traditions are so

strong and so well-defined, as to produce an almost unmistakable family type.

Though the Catholic Church is spread from pole to pole, and its tents are pitched "from sea even unto the sea," and it gathers under them all kinds of men, from the most civilized to him whose dress is barely a loin-cloth, yet we can easily recognize the Catholic, from the manner of his speech, from his attitude towards the most important problems of life and death, from his reactions with respect to his social and political environment, and even from his failings and sins. Consequently, as a member of a great family finds inspiration in its traditions, and glories in its glories, so does a Catholic realize with deep gratitude that he is a brother of the Martyrs and the Confessors and the Virgins. Their lives are an inspiration to him, not only because they are the lives of great and good men, but because he knows that their ideals are his ideals, and their views are his views. How often a great family name is a protection against temptation! Similarly the name of "Catholic" is not infrequently a powerful shield and a strong bulwark against meanness of conduct, or the attacks of the forces of evil.

The feeling of solidarity among the members of the same family is deep and enduring; but such a feeling is changed into a kind of instinct, less conscious, but rooted deeper, amongst the members of the same *organism*. The union in an organism is no mere juxtaposition; the various members of a living body are not merely united according to a plan, which first prepares them, and then joins them together. They have grown in unity, and their growth has been the fulfilment of an immanent design, which is as intimate to the organism as its very essence and being. Hence most intimate and lasting is the community of goods and gifts and interests and pains and joys among the various members of an organic body, which is unified and vivified by the soul, of which, in its turn, the body is the abode and substantial counterpart. For, speaking now of the human organism, body and soul together form the human person, which subsists, feels,

perceives, thinks and wills as one and undivided. Therefore, as the old proverb "*Mens sana in corpore sano*" expresses it, a healthy mind reacts on the body and fortifies its weakness, and a healthy body has its counter-effects on the soul, and contributes to its gladness and buoyancy and harmonious development.

But the Catholic Church, as we have seen in the Chapter on St. Paul, is one of a unity greater than any political or domestic unity, for in her all the members "are fellow heirs, and of the *same body*, and co-partners of his (God's) promise in Jesus Christ." (Eph. III, 6).

Hence the spiritual well-being of the entire organism means the well-being of every individual limb, for, in a sense, the life of every member is caught up and raised to the participation of the organic life, which is one. Again, the sickness and disease of one member reacts on the whole body, and makes it suffer.

This great doctrine, which is one of the corner-stones of Christendom, has been regarded as a mere piece of empty mysticism by the Reformers of the sixteenth century, who have bartered away the great blessings deriving from the corporate union of all Christians, for the doubtful advantages of individualism and extreme spiritual atomism.

According to the apostolic teaching, and the constant tradition of Catholicism, the organic unity of all the members of the Church in Christ Jesus, transcends all the limits of time and space; so that the body of Christ is made up of the *Church Militant*, which exists now, visible and united in the world, of the *Church Triumphant*, which enjoys the glory of God for all eternity, and of the *Church Suffering*, which is gradually purified after death, and made worthy to enter the heavenly Jerusalem.

Since the three Churches are united in one body, there must be a prompt and easy communication of spiritual goods amongst them. Monsabré compares the militant Church in respect to the

Church Triumphant, to an army which is fighting in a country far off, whilst at home all is order, peace and prosperity. The thoughts of all the soldiers are constantly turning towards their mother country, whence they expect help and reinforcements, to carry on the campaign. The fatherland, too, will not forget the toils and sufferings of the brave men, who keep high the honour of their king. And between army and country there exists a close solidarity, which manifests itself in a generous exchange of prayers, benefits, gifts and solicitude, till the day of victory and triumph will dawn, when the victors will come back, and pass in glory through the crowds of their fellow citizens, who welcome them back, and cheer them and strew with flowers the road along which they are marching, whilst the music of drums and trumpets, and the booming of cannon, tells the joy which fills the hearts of all.

The Church Militant, always up in arms against the enemies of Christ, implores and expects from the Church Triumphant a necessary and efficacious help. This expectation belongs of right to her, because she is one with the Church Triumphant in the Mystical Body of Christ. And all will regard as unnatural the Protestant Contention that the Saints in heaven either do not know us, or do not care for us, or are powerless to help us in any way. The Catholic attitude, so beautiful and harmonious, is finely expressed by St. Cyprian in the words which describe the Saints "*Quantum de sua felicitate sécuri, tantum de nostra salute solliciti*"—"The surer they are of their happiness, the more solicitous are they of our salvation."

Again, the spiritual gifts and graces, which circulate throughout the Mystical Body of Christ, reach also the Souls in Purgatory, which are the members of the Church Suffering. Like poor survivors of a wrecked ship, that have been rescued from the fury of the ocean, their countenance shows deep sorrow for the losses they have sustained, and a profound peace and serenity, born of the certainty of their salvation. They repeat to us the

words of Job: "Have mercy on us, friends, have mercy on us." The time for merit is over now for the Saints in heaven; they cannot therefore help the souls in Purgatory directly; but we can apply to them the indulgences, which are but the accumulated merits of Jesus Christ, of our Lady and of the Saints; and so the Church Triumphant helps and consoles the Church Suffering through the love and prayers of the Church Militant.

Love in this manner showers its benefits from the regions of glory to the dwellings of sorrow, making them pass through our agitated fields of battle. And the greater the love, the richer is the communication of the heavenly gifts.

All, however, descend and are derived from Christ Jesus, for He is the principle of unity, on whom all the spiritual goods depend, which are communicated to each and every member of His Mystical Body. All are bound to His divine mediation, and all share His merits and are compenetrated by His divine plenitude.

"Christ is the head of the Church," (Eph. V, 23), and as such He acts everywhere and in every sense, like a physiological centre, from which springs all spiritual activity. In the words of the Council of Trent (sess. xiv, cap. viii): "All our glory is in Christ; in whom we live and die; in whom we offer satisfaction and atonement, doing fruits worthy of penance. These derive their virtue from Him; by Him they are offered to the Father; and through Him the Father accepts them."

He feeds the love whence is derived the communion of graces and benefits. The Church Militant prays, fights, atones, overcomes; but Christ prays, fights, atones and overcomes with her. The Church Triumphant pleads and intercedes; but Christ pleads and intercedes in her. The Church Suffering is comforted and freed, but Christ is the great Consoler and the great Liberator.

(B)

THE TREASURES OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Let us now consider more in detail the graces and gifts which are circulated through the Communion of Saints. They are of three kinds, of which *the first consists of the good works of every Christian soul.* Thus a man strong and prudent, meek and patient, charitable and full of zeal, helps the weak, the wavering, the needy that come into contact with him. Besides this, there is the more permanent effect of the good example, which, through the lives of the Saints, is a constant inspiration for us. They, in a sense, temper and render more accessible to us the transcendent virtue of our Divine Model, Jesus Christ; they adapt it to all states and conditions, to all ages and climates; and they stir up our emulation and holy desires.

The second is made up of all the graces, which are the fruits of the prayers and intercessions of the Saints. These are both hidden and manifest, they are universal, they are continuous. The Church, through her shrines and pilgrimages, through her novenas and processions, through her relics and images, makes us enter into this great communion of prayers, this overwhelming stream of intercession, which rises up to the Throne of God, and, vivified by the omnipotent virtue of Christ, comes back to us. Thus human infirmities are healed, scourges are averted, famine and desolation disappear. Many are consoled, or strengthened, or comforted; many find the courage to overcome temptation, to leave sin, to give themselves to God.

The third arises from the merits, in which the communion of good works and graces is made complete. It is clear that as the deed belongs to the person who does it, and not to anybody else, so the merit, which is attached to any deed, belongs to the same. But it happens that merits are almost always accompanied by an atoning and expiatory virtue, which is destined to extinguish the penal debt which we have contracted with the Divine Justice. Now, the Blessed Virgin had no sin to atone for,

The sins of many saints were few and slight whilst their penances and sufferings were extraordinary. The merit of these penances is entirely *personal*, but inasmuch as they are works of expiation, the saints did not need them, or needed them but in part. This expiation-surplus—so to call it—remains in the treasury of the Church, it is her social capital, it constitutes her reserve funds, which are distributed through the Communion of Saints. In this treasure there are infinite merits, which communicate their virtue to all human merits, and give them, so to say, their legal title, which justifies their circulation. These infinite merits are the expiations of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who—in the words of the Apostle—"was rich, but became poor for you, that you may be enriched through his poverty." Hence the immense spiritual capital of the Church, constituted by the merits of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin, increased by the sufferings of the Apostles and of the Martyrs, enriched by the virtue of the Confessors and of the Virgins, is not lost but is distributed throughout the Mystical Body, and contributes to its development, prosperity, beauty, ornament and perfection. The suffering love accumulates the treasure of its expiations, and the love which feels pity for the misery of others, distributes its overflowing wealth. The *indulgences*, therefore, that are distributed by the Supreme Pontiff can be gained by us, and by us again can be applied to the Souls in Purgatory, we have no other power but to suffer. Thus we may consider the spiritual gifts *coming from heaven*, from the Church Triumphant, which intercedes for us and places its accumulated merits in the hands of the *Church Militant*. This, in its turn, makes its own goods, together with those of the Blessed in heaven, *fall on the Church Suffering*; which again, when freed from its prison, and passing on to heaven, increases the joy and glory of the Saints and thereby repays in a measure their generosity; and at the same time shows its gratitude to the Church Militant, by constantly pleading and interceding for us. It is a magnificent circulation of spiritual goods and treasures, from heaven to earth and purgatory, and from purgatory to earth and heaven!

(C)

A SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION

Now, a visible, though incomplete, representation of the consoling dogma of the Communion of Saints, may be found in one of Raphael's paintings which is to be seen in the so-called "*Camera della Segnatura*" in Rome, and which has been inappropriately called "*La Disputa del Sacramento.*" This great fresco, though faded and damaged in many ways by the ravages of time, is still the joy and attraction of all artists and lovers of art.

The Holy Trinity, conceived in the medieval reverent manner occupies the upper part of the fresco, where God the Father is seen against a golden background, thronged with floating angels. Immediately below Him, in the centre of the heavens is the King of Glory, His only begotten Son. Artists affirm that this is perhaps the most beautiful representation of the Saviour that human hand has ever created. His Divinity shines forth in a golden halo, imperceptibly melting into the azure of the sky, out of which multitudes of happy spirits are looking down. His side is uncovered, and we can see there His sacred wound; His wounded hands are lovingly stretched forth, in priestly gesture inviting all to His banquet. On His right hand, Mary, His Holy Mother, slightly bends in loving adoration; whilst, on His left, St. John the Baptist points to the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world."

The "patricians of this most just and pious empire" as Dante calls them, are ranged in a semicircle, admirable for its clearness and proportion. The Saints of the Old Testament are mingled with the heroes of the New, thereby indicating how Jesus Christ, is the King of all ages, and the source of Sanctity for all times. In his selection of the Saints and in their arrangement, Raphael is guided partly by Dante—the Poet of Christendom—and partly by the prayers of the Mass.

The teacher and guardian of the faith, St. Peter, sits on the extreme left, next to Adam, who turns though fully towards the Vicar of Christ, musing perhaps on the two great facts, which sum up the whole of history: The fall of man and the Redemption. Next come St. John, the beloved Disciple, and David, together with St. Lawrence and the Prophet Jeremias. The right hand side begins with St. Paul, strong and energetic, leaning on his sword, by which he was martyred, and which symbolizes his preaching: "The word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword." Then we have Abraham, with the sacrificial knife in his hand, St. James holding a book, and Moses with the tables of the Law. Next comes St. Stephen, the first Martyr of Christ, and finally a warrior, who is probably Judas Machabeus.

This represents the Church Triumphant, grouped round the Trinity, together with the choirs of Angels, all saved through the virtue of Christ, which reaches up to the beginning of the human race, and down to the end of time. But for the Blessed Virgin, there are no women in the picture; and this I consider a fault, for surely a place should have been given to them in the heavenly court, and in the adoration of the divine Victim.

The Church Triumphant is connected with the Church Militant by the Holy Ghost, who is seen in the shape of a Dove, attended by four Cherubs, each carrying one of the Gospels. The Dove is surrounded by a halo; and the graces which are derived from it, are indicated by rays, the lowermost of which lead the eye to the monstrance which contains the Sacred Host.

All ornaments are excluded both from the monstrance and from the Altar. But there is the Blessed Sacrament, so small and apparently insignificant, yet, since the Godhead lies hidden there, it attracts our gaze, and, next to the Christ in heaven, is the most important thing in the whole picture. Round It the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant are gathered, and from It the vivifying Blood of the Saviour streams down to

console and liberate the Church Suffering in Purgatory. This is not shown in the picture, but merely suggested by the Altar, which is the symbol of sacrifice. So, Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament appears to be the meeting point where heaven and earth are united, and the central source of all supernatural life which fecundates and elevates the whole human race.

On both sides of the Altar stand the Doctors and Saints of the Church, Popes and Cardinals, Priests—secular and regular—Scholars and Artists, Poets and Philosophers.

The scope of the picture far transcends its immediate limits. We see the long ages of humanity straining to understand the mysteries of the divine economy, which centre in Jesus Christ; the figures, full of emotion, show an intense effort to understand. It is faith seeking intelligence, and intelligence content to bow before the unfathomable mysteries of faith. And there is no sign of contention, but over all hovers the spirit of heavenly calm, and the majestic peace of the Sanctuary.

The background of the lower part of the picture consists of an open country, where we see the massive remains of an ancient building. This perhaps represents the achievements of human endeavour, which the Church does not despise, but uses to build up a harmonious civilization, where matter is subordinate to mind, mind to reason, and reason to God's own revelation.

On the two sides of the Altar, arranged on the broad steps which lead up to it, we see the four great Fathers of the Western Church, St. Augustine and St. Ambrose on the right, and St. Gregory and St. Jerome on the left.

They represent a harmonious blending of Sanctity and Intelligence, of Faith and Science. Their light all comes from the Word of God, and is all reflected back to His honour and glorification.

To the right of St. Ambrose and St. Augustine stand St. Thomas of Aquin, the Philosopher Saint, who has harmonized

the highest speculation with the deepest faith and holiness. Then we have Innocent III, author of a celebrated work on the Mass, and great Pontiff, who succeeded, better than anybody else before or after him, to unite and coordinate both the spiritual and the temporal power in loving obedience to Christ and His Vicar on Earth.

Near the Pope there is St. Bonaventure, the Seraphic Doctor, and then Sixtus IV, an accredited exponent of the Sacrament of faith, and finally Dante, who represents the triumph of Christian Art in admirably blending together Philosophy and Theology in a Poem of unsurpassed beauty.

On the left side, after St. Gregory we notice a beautiful group of three young men kneeling in adoration, and beyond them the Religious Orders are represented by an Augustinian, a Benedictine, a Franciscan and a Dominican. The background is filled with other figures, and amongst them that of Fra Angelico, in blissful contemplation. As Dante symbolizes Catholic Literature doing homage to our Lord Jesus Christ, so Catholic Art bows before Him in the person of Fra Angelico, and acknowledges Him as the purest source of its inspiration and high achievements. For the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist is not only an object of deep study for Philosophers and Theologians; it is also a source of inspiration to poets and artists; it is in fact the focus round which gravitates all Christian life, and the food and strength of all Christian souls.

In the Holy Eucharist we have not a commemoration of Christ, we have Christ Himself, the God-Man, the Saviour, and the Redeemer, the source of all graces, the way to heaven and heaven itself. Consequently this Sacrament is the centre of the Universe, where all the glories of nature and all the miracles of grace meet, and whence they irradiate. From here stream the seven Sacraments, which fertilize the Church; the virtues of all the Confessors, the heroism of the Martyrs, the zeal of the Apostles, the purity of the Virgins all blossom around this spring of grace.

This is the heart of the living Church, this is the point where heaven touches earth, which has become "the House of God and the gate of heaven."

The Altar, on which stand, the Sacred Host, and the glorified Saviour, who is painted, immediately above, indicate that the Eucharist is not only a Sacrament, but that it is also a Sacrifice. Without both the Sacrament and the Sacrifice the life of the Church would perish, our visible connection with God would cease, Theology would lose its crown, Philosophy miss the star which illumines so many of its profoundest speculations.

The Host is here raised above the heads of all the Faithful who worship it, and the rays of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven and illumine it. By this the painter wants to show that the Eucharist unites the Church Triumphant with the Church Militant, that it brings heaven amongst us, and that it raises us to heaven, the blessed in heaven find their happiness in the contemplation of God made man; we find our joy and strength in the love and adoration of God made man, hidden under the Sacred species. The two parts of the picture are thus linked into a harmonious whole through the identity of Christ hidden in the Sacrament and glorious in heaven; just as through the same Christ the harmony is restored between God and man, between heaven and earth. Thus Raphael expresses in painting what Thomas of Aquin emphasizes in writing, that the Eucharist is essentially the Sacrament of union, of God with men, and of men amongst themselves. Thus we have the whole court of heaven and the whole of mankind on earth gathered round the Incarnate Son of God in His character of Victim. What is seen below is essentially the same as what appears above; only that below we have faith, above sight.

To conclude with the words of the great Historian of the Popes, L. Pastor, whom we have followed in the description of this wonderful masterpiece of Christian Art, "the *Disputa*

represents the supreme, the absolutely perfect unity; above, the apotheosis of all the love and life of the old and the new convenants in the vision of Him who is the Triune God; below, the glorification of all human knowledge and art in the faith in the real presence of the Redeemer in the Most Holy Sacrament. *This is the central force which impels and harmonizes all the powers of heaven and earth; all the waters of life above as well as below the firmament well up from this source, and pulsate "as in a spherical vessel from centre to circle, and so back from circle to centre."* (*Dante, Paradise, XIV, 1—2*).

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